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**PREVIEWED MAFIA**

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**SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II**  
**OF REVIEWED**

# PCZONE

THE BEST PC GAMES MAG

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's here! The new classic from the Baldur's Gate team

**REVIEWED**

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MANHATTAN PROJECT  
TEAM FACTOR  
STAR WARS GALACTIC  
BATTLEGROUNDS:  
CLONE CAMPAIGNS  
GORE**

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BIGGEST GAMES OF  
2003



INCLUDING

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ISSUE #118 AUG 2002 £4.99





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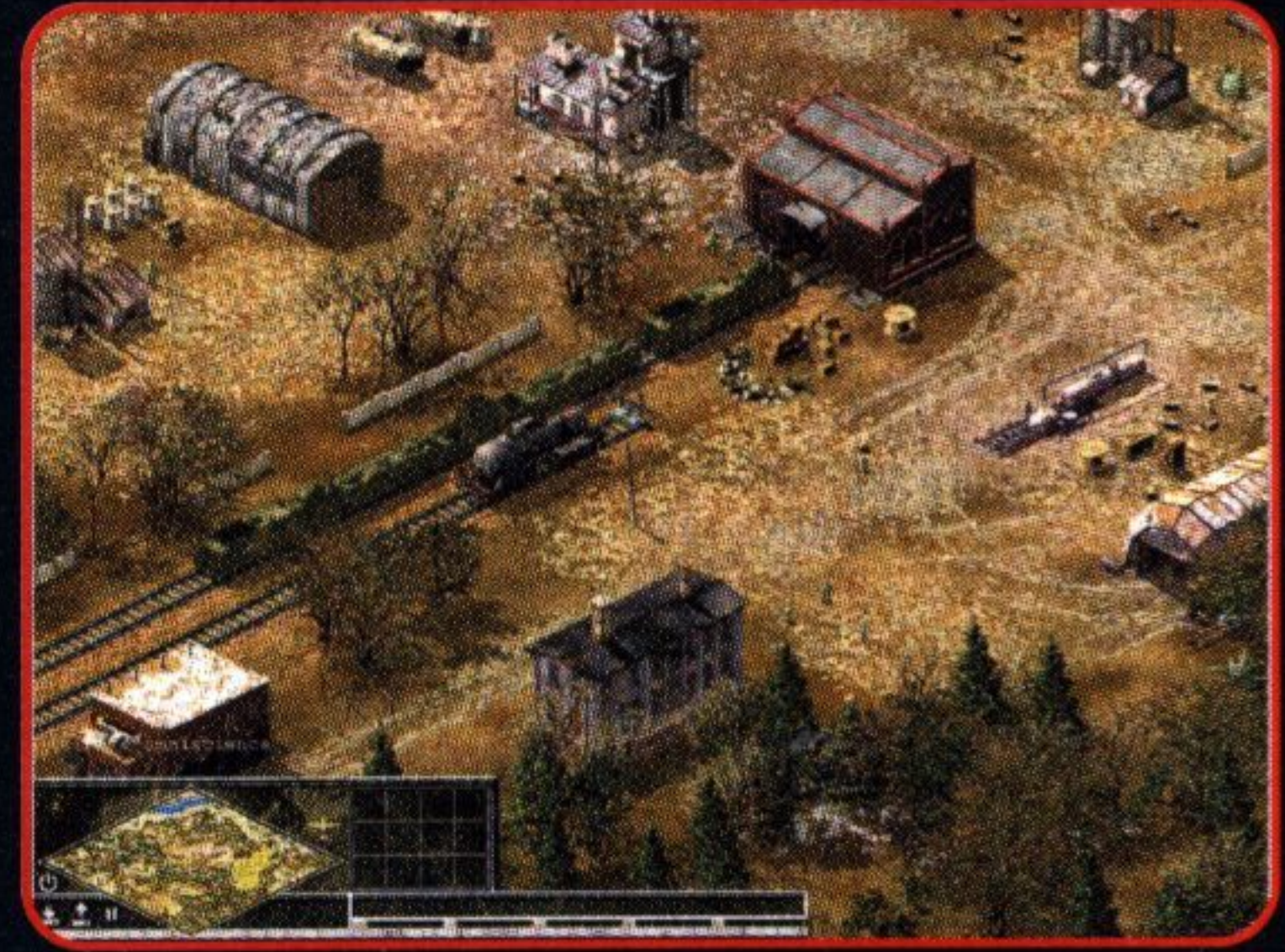
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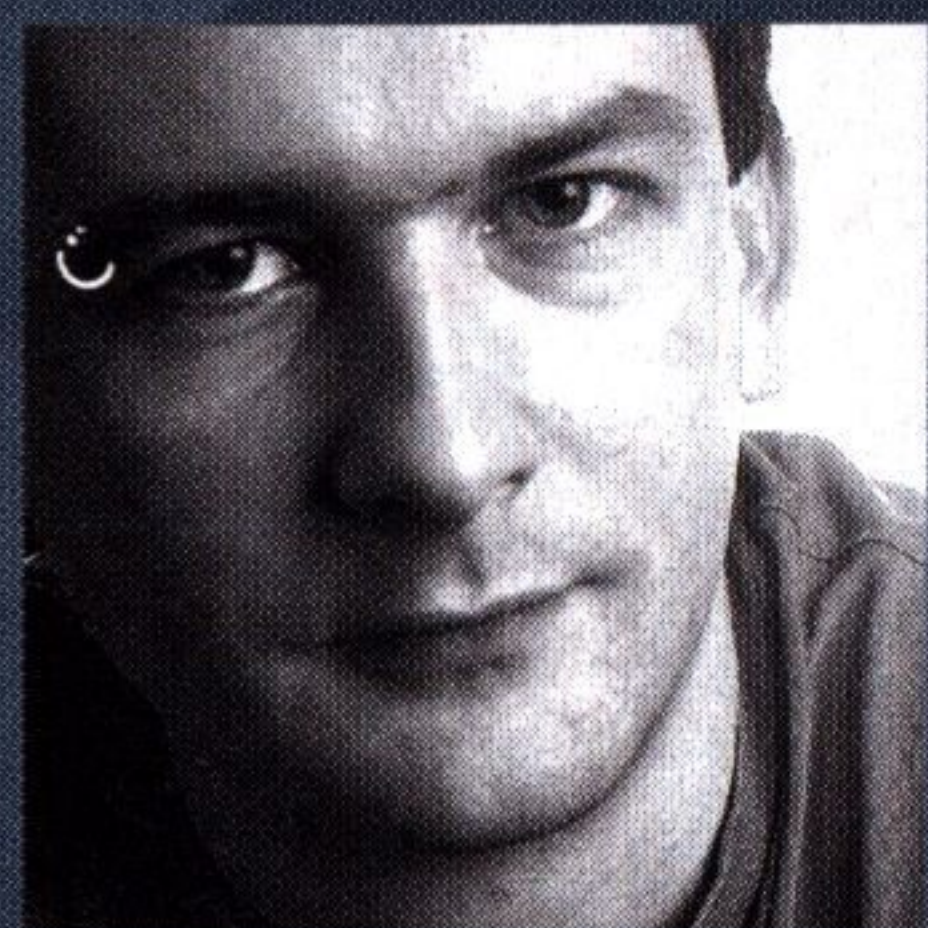
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# Hello Doom, Goodbye Richie



Good and bad in equal measures this month. First the good news: I've just arrived back from LA on a flight so turbulent I thought I was going to die, a fantasy fuelled by the sight of a work colleague sat next to me, gripping his food tray and slowly and methodically working through

his entire range of swear words. It was worth it though as I'd just visited the biggest games show in the world, E3, a massive event populated by the world's biggest developers, some of the world's biggest men and about 60,000 hacks and industry bods hoping to get the first look at the next big thing. And some of us did.

*Doom III* wasn't on the Activision stand as such but in a darkened room with a queue outside the length of a long piece of string. Whisked to the front ahead of some seriously disgruntled Americans I saw something that proves the PC is the most dynamic games machine in the world. Six months ago the Xbox might have been cutting edge, but it's been superseded in a way I wouldn't have thought possible in such a short length of time. *Doom III* is proof that games are about to go photo-realistic, and it's no exaggeration to say that this game points the way to the next huge leap in gaming. It was our game of the show, as you'll see if you turn over a couple of pages.

On a much sadder note, Richie Shoemaker has decided to leave *ZONE* this month to pursue a career changing nappies. He joined us as a flaxen-haired youth five years back and has since thrilled the world with his crack-addled ramblings, rising to the rank of deputy editor before succumbing to the sins of the flesh and retiring early to raise his offspring. We'll miss him enormously, not least because he's literally a walking encyclopaedia of games. Whatever we wanted to know he'd have the answer, although he has promised to be on call 24 hours a day if we get particularly stuck.

He'll still be writing for us in a freelance capacity (although if he phones me again to say "I'm sitting in front of the TV with a two-litre bottle of Pepsi Max watching the World Cup, what are you doing?" he might find his offers of work drying up), but you will find a new deputy editor installed in the next couple of months. To tide us over until the new appointment, new boy Steve O'Hagan is temporarily taking over the reins as of next month. See you then.

*Dave Woods*

Dave Woods  
Editor



## NEVERWINTER NIGHTS P58

THE MOST HOTLY ANTICIPATED RPG OF  
THE YEAR HAS FINALLY ARRIVED.  
PREPARE TO BE SPELLBOUND

## COVER DISCS P118



### 9 PLAYABLE DEMOS INCLUDING...

Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, The Sum Of All Fears, F1 2002, Ricochet, Stealth Combat, Elixir, Age Of Wonders 2 and Laser Squad Nemesis

### DVD EXCLUSIVE: DVD ZONE

Five demos not on the CDs: Mobile Forces, Gore, Zanzahar: The Hidden Portal, Hotel Giant and Monsterville, as well as our DVD essentials

### PC ZONE SUPERTEST

The latest versions of the mods featured in this month's Supertest – Jailbreak: POW, Alliance, Proball and Painkeep

### PLUS

All the latest patches, movies and more, including the trailers for all the biggest games from E3.

Contents differ between the CDs and the DVD. Check the disc pages for more details



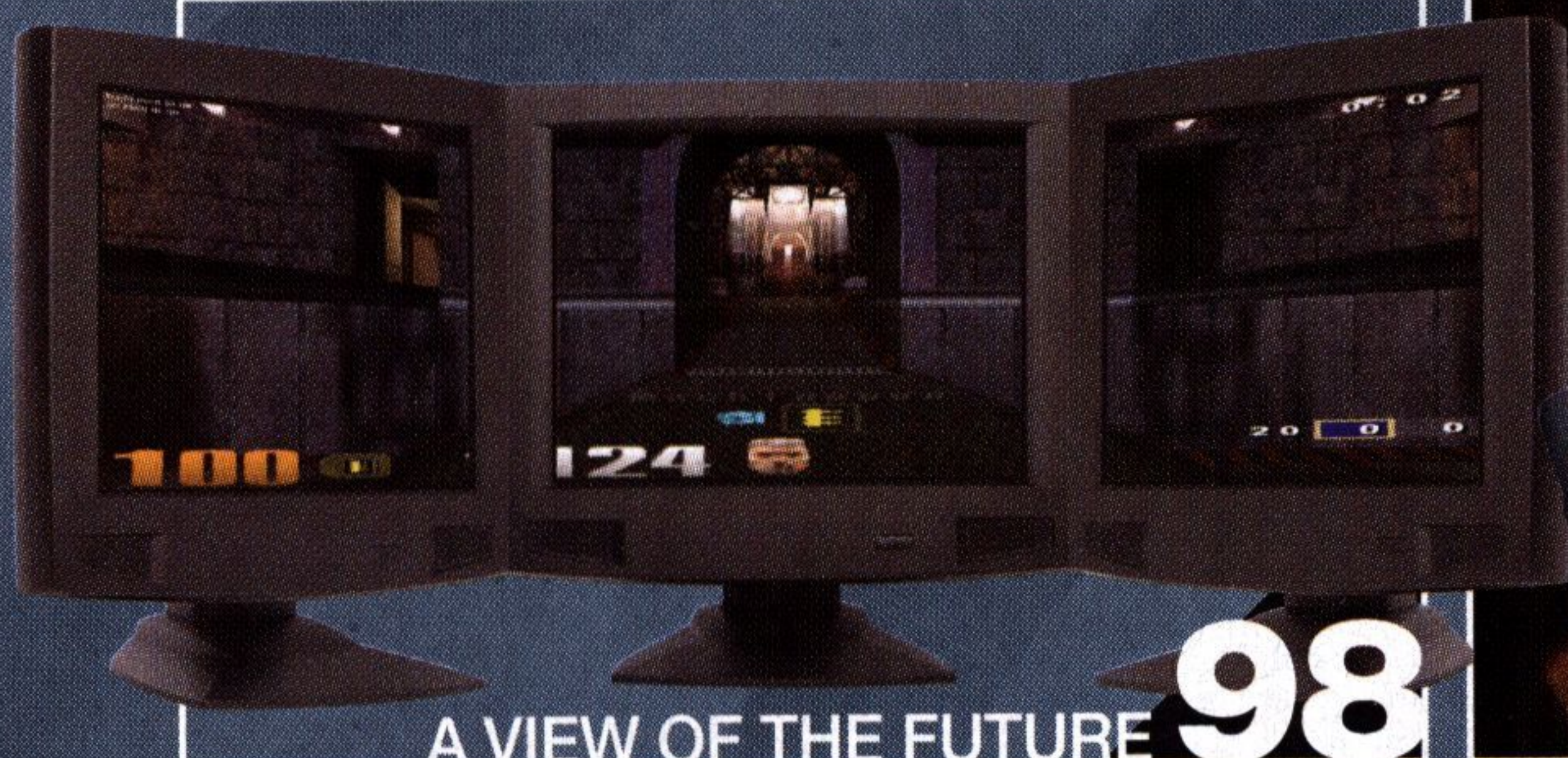




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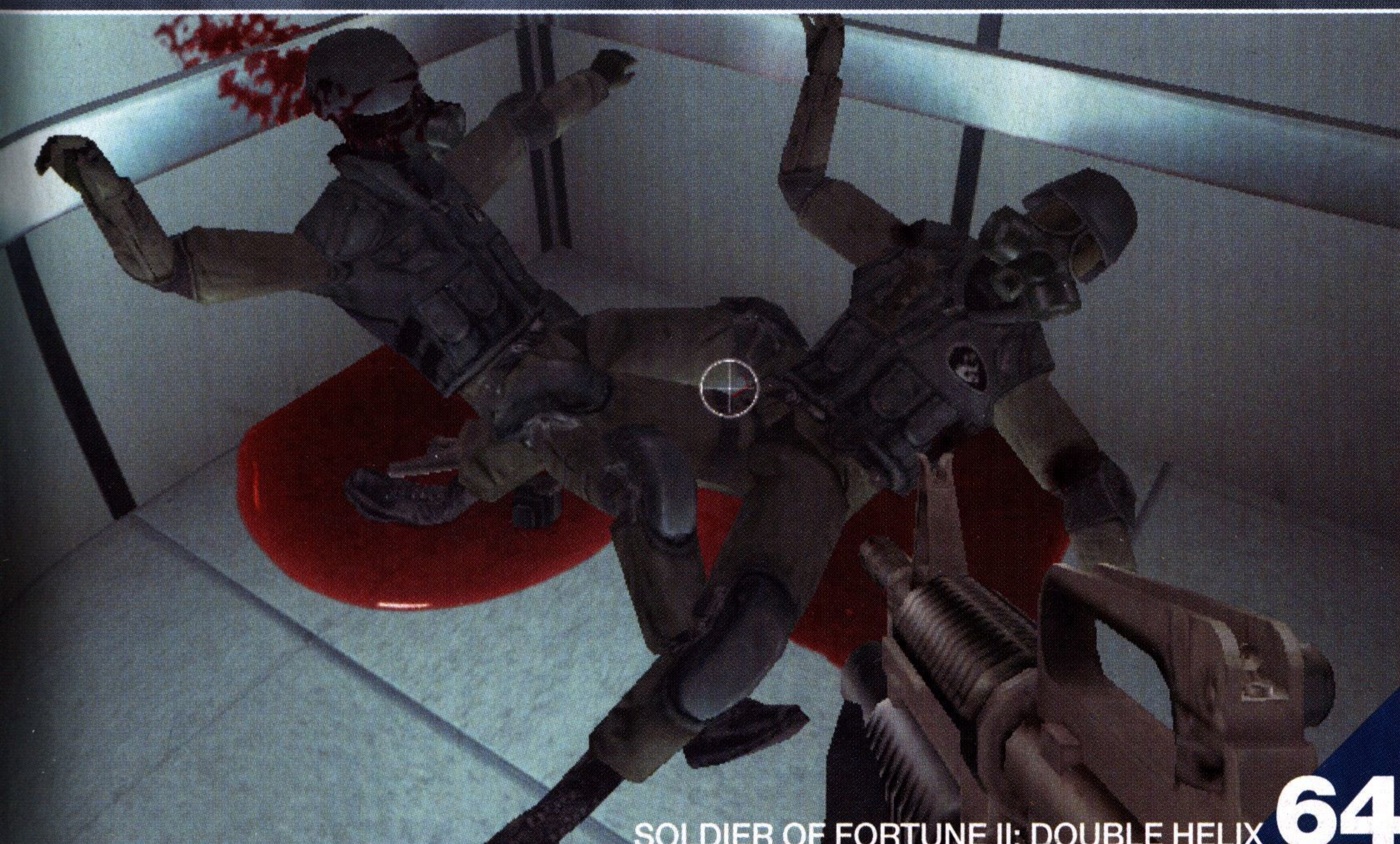
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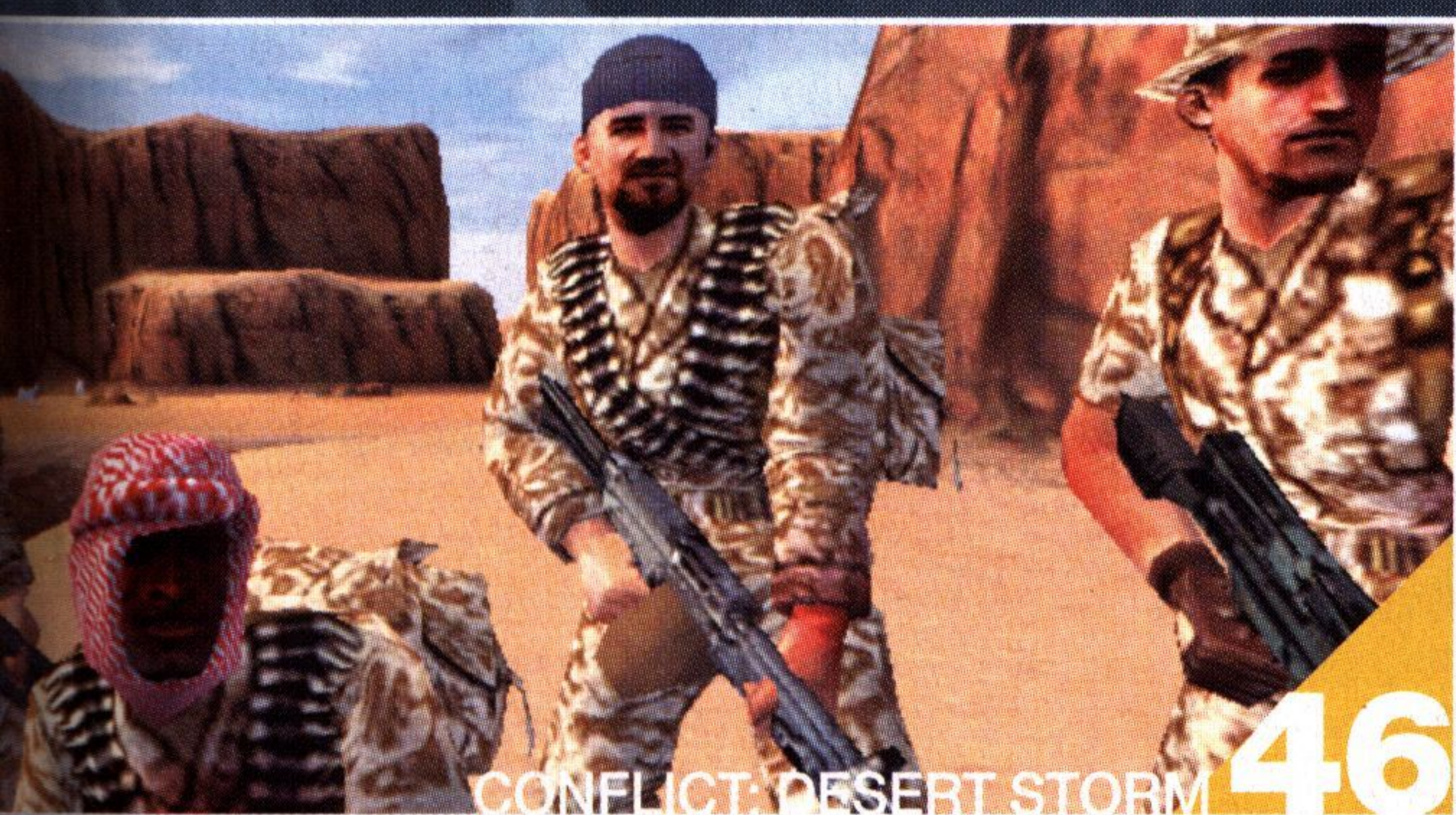




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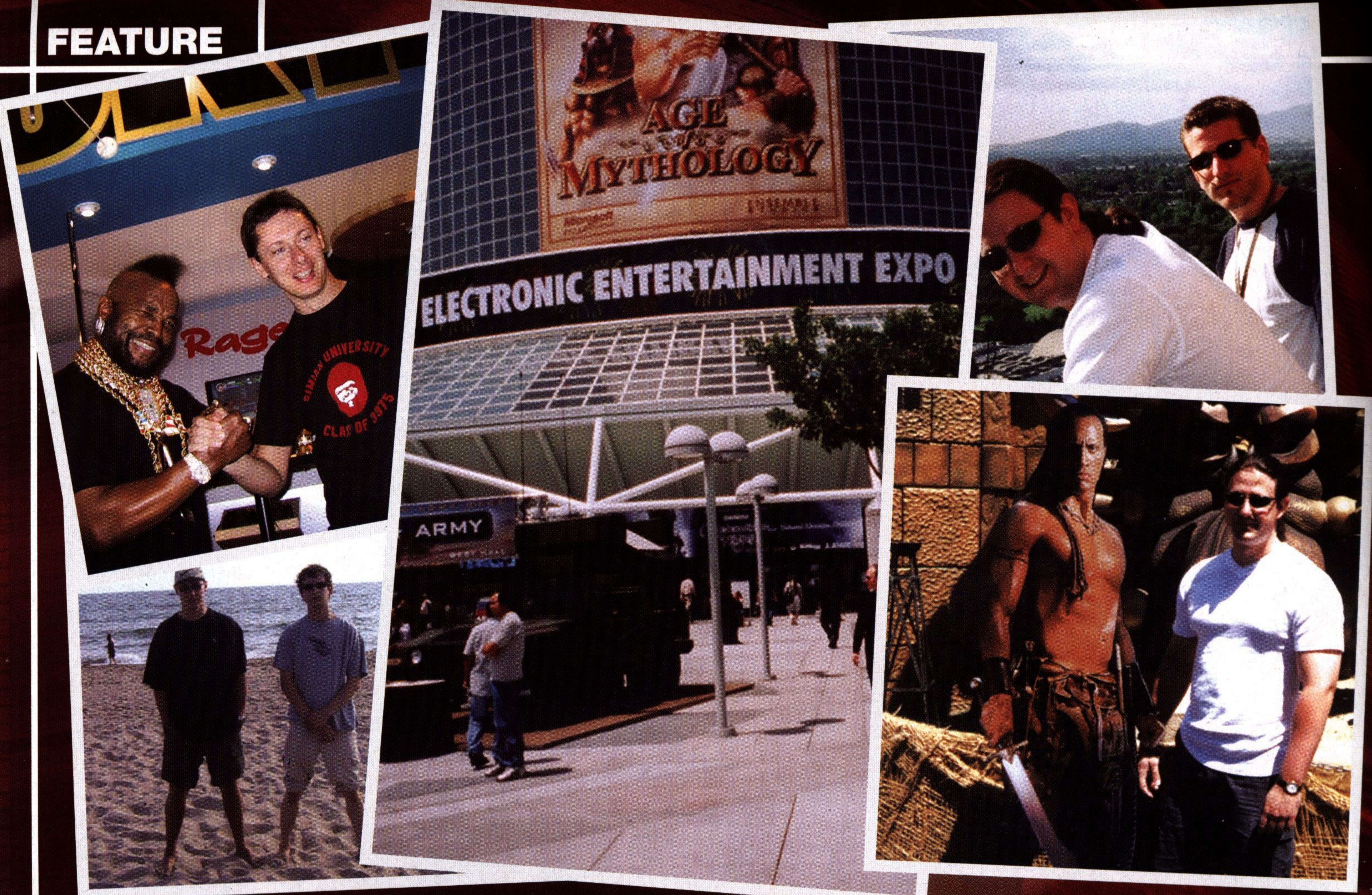
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# E3 AWARDS: ZONE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

Four pasty white blokes, thousands of games. It can only be E3. PC ZONE reports

**HERE WE GO** again then. The E3 show seems to come around quicker than Christmas, and is generally greeted with a similar mix of gleeful expectation and jaded cynicism. While to a games enthusiast, it may sound like the greatest show on Earth, for a working journalist, trudging from hall to hall, wrestling with sleep deprivation and alcohol poisoning, it can often err on the wrong side of fun.

If you don't know what we're talking about, the Electronic Entertainment Expo is the largest of its kind in the world, and was again held at the Los Angeles Convention Centre, a rogue basketball throw away from the home of the LA Lakers, who at the time of the show were embroiled in a play-off series against the Sacramento Kings. That may have been the hottest ticket in town, but attendance-wise it was dwarfed by the turnout at E3. It is estimated that 60,000 people passed through the doors over the three days, and cabbies reported their busiest week since September 11 (the more unscrupulous drivers celebrating this fact by introducing entirely arbitrary fares).

With so many people and so many games to see, drawing attention to the 'product' is key, and as usual, little expense was spared. Strategies included vast, architecturally complex stands, ear-splitting music, celebrity appearances, and of course female flesh, the notorious 'booth babes' offering callow youths (and middle-aged men) countless opportunities to debase themselves by posing for photographs with women with whom they will never have consensual sex. These are the same people who shamelessly scrabbled about for a free T-shirt on the basis that it had been blessed - ie touched - by a model.

For the first-time visitor in particular, E3 is a bewildering audio-visual assault, and not especially conducive to work. Having negotiated the obligatory wet lettuce handshake, you can be halfway through having the complexities of a turn-based online motorcycle squad shooter strategy game explained, only for *Jurassic 5* to begin a 15-minute set on the next stand. When enduring countless demos per day, a cunning ploy of nodding at the right time is required. And during any lull in the

conversation, chipping in with a stock question such as "How many weapons?" usually works, although not if you're being shown a football game.

As for the attendees, it was the standard mix of the good, the bad and the clinically obese. The Big Men of E3 were out in force, maintaining their steady diet of pizza and fries, and then thinking about what to have for lunch. Huge slabs of meat in a bun passed as burgers, and the queues were rarely less than a ton deep. Some Brits refused to have any truck with this, simply strolling to the front and helping themselves, often without paying. We're ashamed to admit to being party to such shocking acts.

This year's celebrity turnout was passable, and although generally shunned by the A-list, sightings included Carmen Electra, WWF star Stacey Kiebler, Antonio Fargas (Huggy Bear from *Starsky and Hutch*), diminutive *Diff'rent Strokes* star Gary Coleman (who is tenuously involved with *Postal 2*), film director John Carpenter (looking the worse for wear promoting *The Thing*) and Tony Hawk, spotted going arse over tit on a half-pipe.

All of these paled into insignificance though, compared to the appearance of the main man, the big cheese, the inimitable Mr T, whose presence proved something of an epiphany for one PC ZONE staffer. Picture a young Martin Korda, mesmerised by the behemoth that was *The A-Team's* BA Barracus and *Rocky III's* Clubber Lang. Korda vowed to drink his milk and lift his weights, resulting in the sculpted body he has today. Twenty years on, and Korda finally comes face to face with his hero, who promptly declares the muscular reviews ed "a very powerful man". It doesn't get much better.

## THE PC ZONE E3 AWARDS

We saw hundreds of games at E3. The following pages cover 32 of the best, 12 of which were good enough to warrant serious attention. Starting with *Doom III* we've rated the games in order of which impressed us the most. In the panels on pages 22-23 we've covered the Best of the Rest and then come the Dark Horses, games which don't have big names but look like rocking big bells. Remember where you read about them first.





# DOOM III

Once again, a bunch of quiet Texans have raised the bar for graphical achievement

■ Pub: Activision | Dev: id Software | ETA: Spring 2003

**“You may have heard it a hundred times already, but *Doom III* really did eclipse everything else at E3”**

**IT WAS A FOREGONE** conclusion really. A new game from FPS masters id Software, a new engine from the da Vinci of 3D rendering, sequel to one of the most influential and adored games of all time – only an act of GoD (or maybe Valve) could prevent *Doom III* from stealing the show in LA. What we didn't know was that it would also snatch away, within a few frames of the in-game footage rolling across the demo screen, our hard-bitten journalistic scepticism, our carefully cultivated cynicism – not to mention our obscenely oversized American breakfasts – leaving us in a state of unseemly fanboy delirium.

You may have heard it a hundred times already, but *Doom III* really did eclipse everything else at E3 with its astonishing visual sophistication. Phrases we've heard bandied around by developers for the past couple of years – 'spectral lighting', 'real-time shadows', 'rag doll physics' – suddenly dropped their sheen of hyperbole and took on a palpable reality. As id programmer Robert Duffy put it: 'Visually and aurally, everything that we're doing is moving the genre forward.'





**“Our primary design goal is to basically terrify people the first time they play it”**

Lucky thing really, since the boys from Texas do seem content to continue polishing their winning formula when it comes to gameplay. Aside from being a tad slower and scarier than your average FPS, the gameplay in *Doom III* is as familiar as the WASD keys on your sweat-stained keyboard. However, Carmack and co have created a world so convincing, so immersive, that, as with *Doom* and *Quake* before it, the time-honoured forward-forward-shoot dynamic has been given a new lease of life.

Marty Stratton, director of business development at id, had this to say: “*Doom III* is more or less a retelling of *Doom*, though we’re doing many things different from a story perspective – and it is far and away the most story id has ever put into a title. But you’ll see a lot of hold-over from *Doom* in terms of monsters – imps, revenants, pinky demons – though you won’t necessarily recognise them as such.” The weapon set too is familiar, with shotgun, pistol and maybe even BFG all returning in some guise.

The action once again takes place on a futuristic Martian colony, where a gate into hell has unleashed the horrors of the demon world. The inhabitants of the colony have been transformed into a variety of demonic forms – shambling *Resident Evil*-style zombies, ex-marines with whip-like tentacle arms – and needless to say it’s your job to sort the mess out.

Admittedly, gameplay does promise to be a little more complex than the original *Doom*. “We’re going to have a very advanced AI system, probably more advanced than

we need for *Doom III*. But you know, these are demons, they’re not PhDs, and we’re not trying to emulate human behaviour or anything. But there’s definitely going to be co-operative AI and things like that.”

But when you get down to it, the only real departure in *Doom III* is the deeply horror-fuelled and discomforting atmosphere, which shifts the emphasis from rapid action and mass carnage to tense foreboding and scripted scare scenarios. “We’re aiming for the most terrifying ultra-realistic single-player experience possible,” says Duffy. “We’re trying to immerse people in a movie-like environment. From a speed perspective, it’s nothing like *Quake III* or even *Quake II*; the best word is ‘deliberate’.”

The caveat that accompanies this is twofold – first and foremost, multiplayer will be restricted to very basic deathmatch. And slow deathmatch at that, as all the advanced graphics tech means that twitch-based gameplay and high frame-rates are not feasible.

Secondly, the heavy reliance on scripted scenarios means it may be a once-only playthrough. As Marty Stratton admits: “Replayability isn’t a design goal for us. Our primary design goal is to basically terrify people the first time they play it.”

Of course, id will be licensing the new *Doom* engine – indeed Raven is already working on *Quake IV* – so now that id has opened the gates of Hell, we can look forward to all sorts of equally trouser-fouling goodness from the rest of the FPS community at next year’s E3.

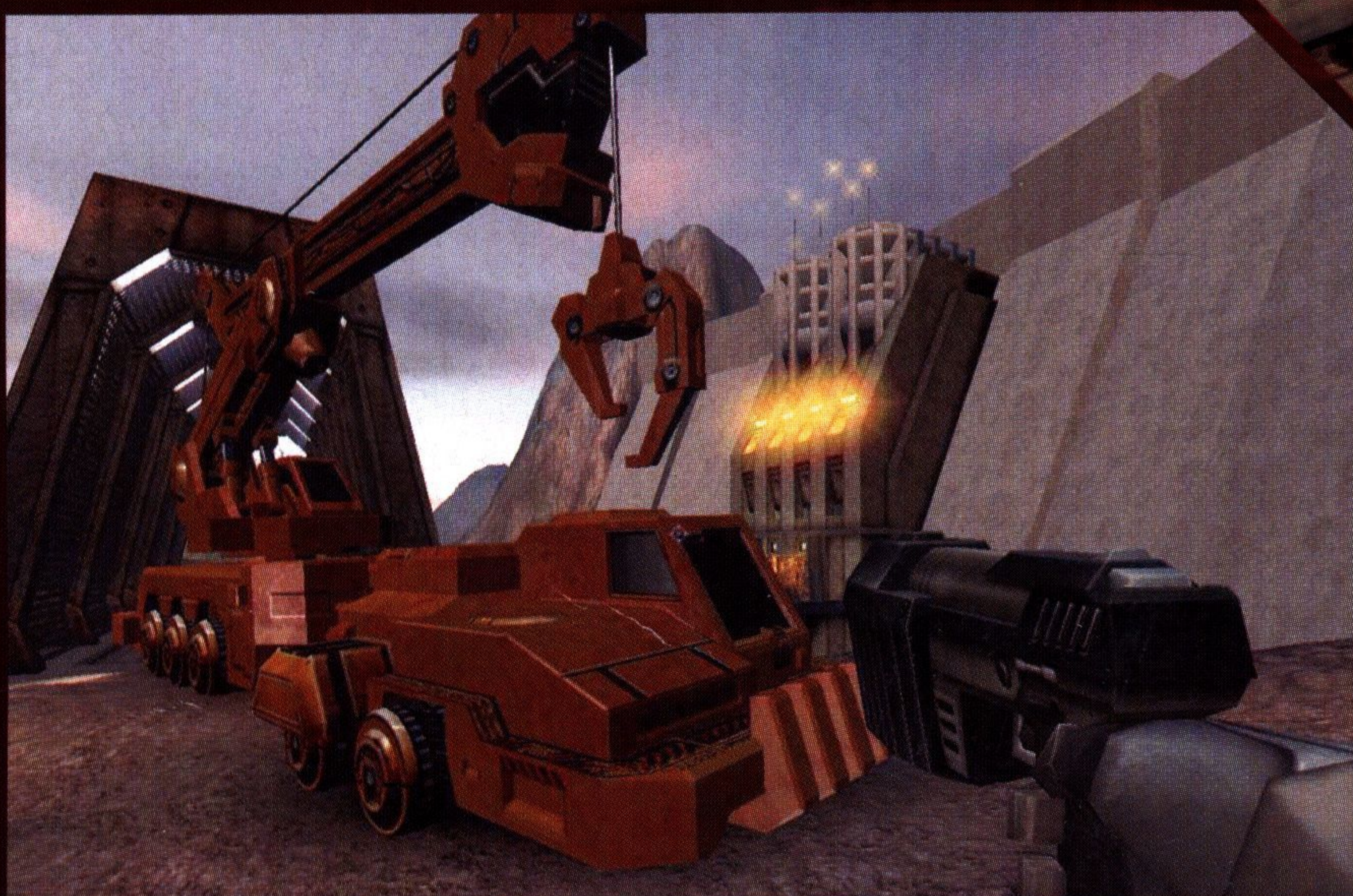
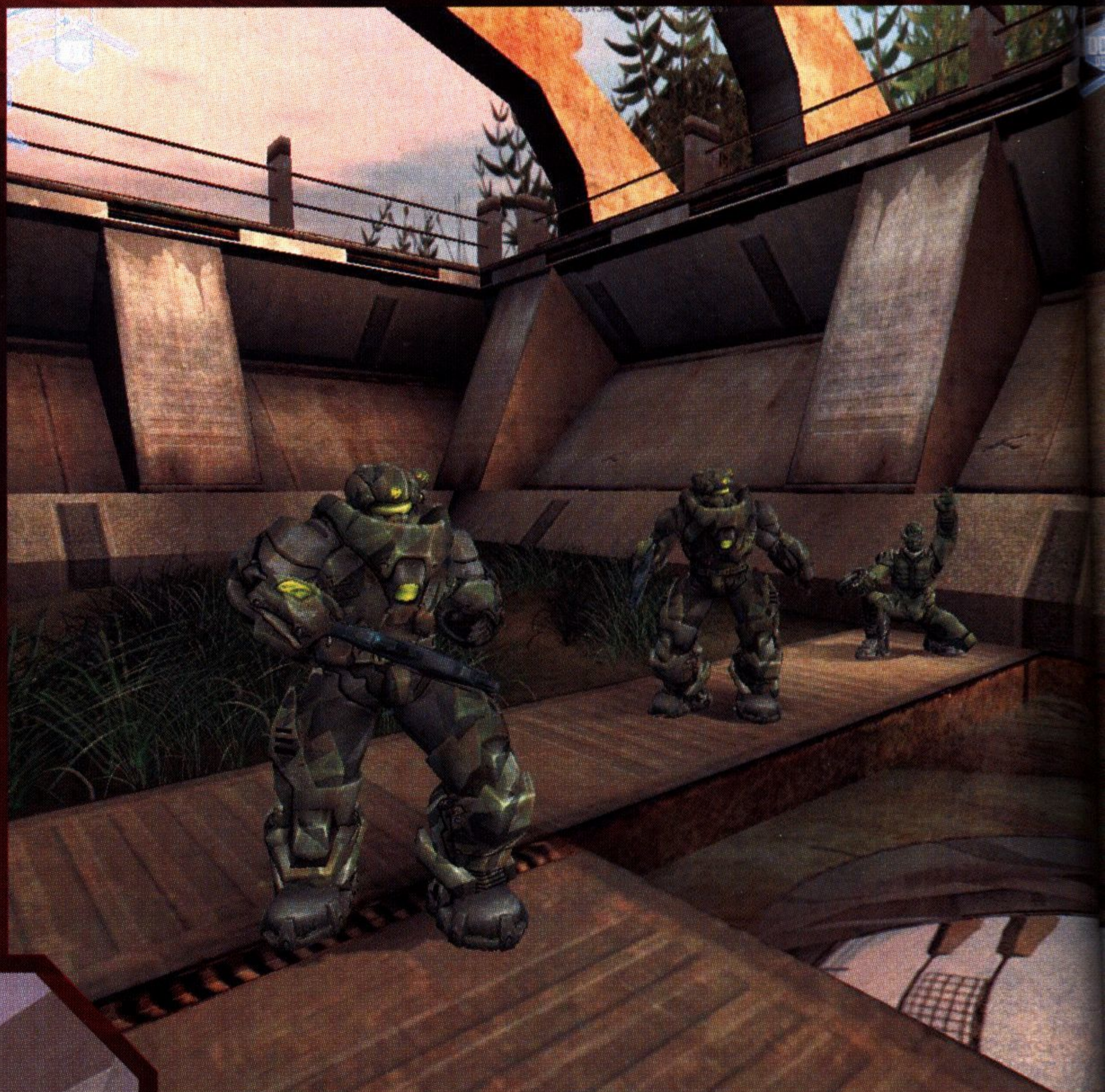




It may be a re-telling of *Doom* in story terms, but the gameplay is a world apart. With a pace more akin to the original *Quake*, *Doom III* is concerned chiefly with scaring the living crap out of us, something it looks like having little trouble achieving.







# UNREAL II

**Second, but certainly not second-best, we reckon *Unreal II* is going to be the game of 2002**

■ Pub: Infogrames | Dev: Legend Entertainment | ETA: Christmas 2002

**WHILE THE WORLD**, his wife and a few rather fat gentlemen were raving about *Doom III*, the fact remains that you can't tell much about a game from a 10-minute video. *The Matrix* looks good on a big screen but you're not going to get anywhere plugging a mouse and a keyboard into the projector and attempting to change the outcome. So, while id and its merry bunch of programming pranksters ready their beast for the next public showing, we reckon that *Unreal II* was the hottest playable property at the show. Admittedly we weren't allowed to get our hands on it, but we were dragged behind closed doors where head of Legend, Mike Verdu, was hunched over a mouse and keyboard.

While setting up a mission Mike explains that the game contains 30 levels split over 13 different combat

missions but that narrative is all-important. These missions might involve completely different tactics and scenarios, but the central driving force is the story. After each mission is complete you go back to your ship, the Atlantis, and interact with the characters on board which fleshes out the plot and throws you a few curve balls to contend with.

Pretty soon we're being introduced to a planet covered by a single gigantic organism with pores "the size of starships". The evil Sinarki Corporation has been methodically killing the creature with a ring of giant chemical reactors they're using to convert the atmosphere to earth-standard oxygen/nitrogen levels, but now they've stopped terraforming and have converged on a single site. Aida, your dashing

Intelligence Officer continues: "We believe they have found an artefact and are about to take it off-world. We are cloaking in one day ahead of a marine attack force, our mission is to gather intel only. Do not get close enough to be detected. Do not engage in combat. The station is guarded by Sinarki ghost warriors who have no love for us at all."

A stirring score kicks in and we're suddenly on the planet where all thoughts of stealth are thrown out when Mike's spotted in about ten seconds flat. Cue big gun battles where the AI is showing promise if not its true potential. Mike shows off some of the 'rag-doll' physics the *Unreal* engine is swiftly gathering a reputation for, before heading for the mysterious artefact. "We want to provide a number of great gaming moments," Mike



2



says before unleashing one without warning. We won't spoil the surprise for you.

Before we were whisked out Mike showed us part of another mission, one that illuminated the differing styles of gameplay *Unreal II* is set to offer. The Atlantis is damaged and you have to set down for repairs on a planet. While it's on the surface it's vulnerable, and the bad guys know where you are so you have to set up a perimeter around your ship to protect it with the help of gun turrets and force fields (or deployable plasma field generators as your engineer prefers to call them). Where most shooters are attack, attack, attack, it seems that *Unreal II* is going for attack, narrative, teamwork, defence, character interaction, attack. Or as Mike puts it: "As we've been saying through the entire course of

development, we've really gone to great lengths to create an experience that we hope will have a tremendous amount of variety. Not only are the locations that you visit visually very, very different... but also the game styles are very distinct."

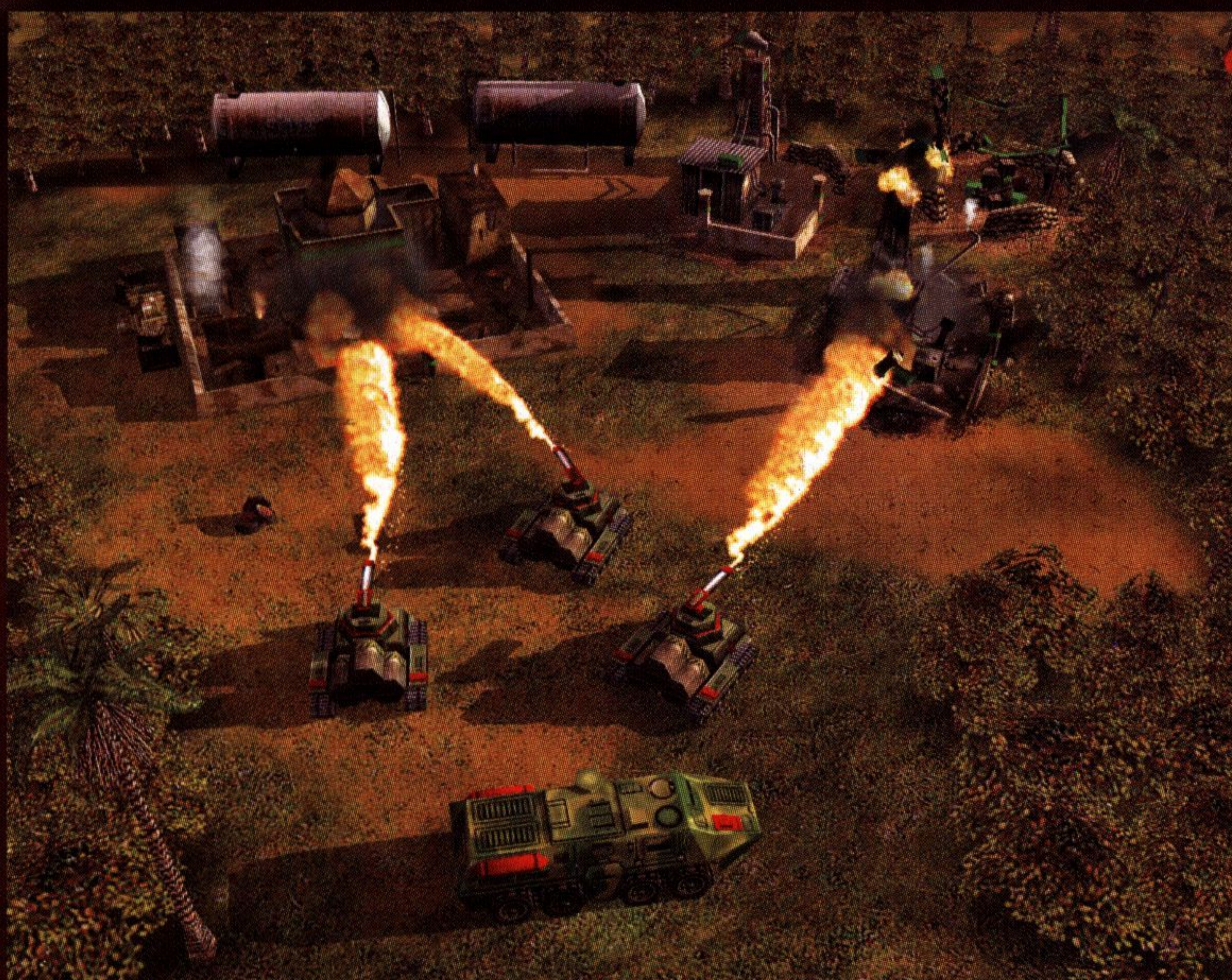
And it looks like it's living up to its early promise. It might not compete with *Doom III* in terms of visuals, but it's getting released this year and it's looking like the most complete shooter ever. The emphasis on single-player (yeah, we're over the fact that multiplayer's been taken out) and the bits of the story we've played through so far give you the feeling that you're immersed in something much bigger than your average shooter, and should help to make this the game of the year. If it gets released this side of Christmas of course. Over to you Mike.

**"We've gone to great lengths to create an experience that will have a tremendous amount of variety"**



3

**"It looks amazing, but what wasn't apparent from this short mission was the scope of the gameplay"**



# COMMAND & CONQUER: GENERALS

**Westwood is back with a bang**

■ Pub: EA | Dev: Westwood | ETA: Christmas 2002

**NOW THIS IS** an odd one. Westwood hasn't exactly set the world on fire with its last few strategy games, playing it safe and sticking to the same kind of gameplay that worked for them the first time around. Since then we've had *Shogun* showing the way forward and *Medieval*, its fantastic-looking sequel, taking up the challenge. So why do we think *Generals* was the best strategy game at E3, while *Medieval* is languishing in the Best of the Rest, along with *Sim City 4* and the fabulous *Age Of Mythology*? (Clue: it's not because we're sucking on Westwood gristle.)

We know we're going out on a limb, but when we sat through the presentation of *Generals* we got the sneaking suspicion that Westwood is going to get this one right. The 3D engine is one big reason and seeing it running at E3 proved that Westwood has gained from biding their time and watching other strategy games make the mistake of going there first.

Mark Skaggs, executive producer on the game, ran us through a typical mission, which kicks off with a botched political assassination in a small fishing village. A UN envoy, being escorted to Kazakhstan, is ambushed by two vehicles that explode and take out the escort

vehicles, giving us the first taste of the cinematic quality of the visuals. After a hefty firefight Skaggs settles in control of a US and allied Chinese base and orders the construction of a nuke.

A bridge separates him from the enemy GLA base, and a huge dam is located upstream. As he sends in the heavy weaponry he notices that he's missed a stray GLA buggy heading for the dam. A few rockets later and the dam's gone, unleashing a torrent of water down onto the village. Instead of leaving this to your imagination, the new engine enables you to track major events like this and witness the fallout, in this case the sight of the villagers attempting, and ultimately failing, to outrun the water. Of course, being a Westwood presentation, Skaggs gets his ultimate revenge by calling a nuclear strike and obliterating the GLA troops.

It looks amazing, but what wasn't apparent from this short mission was the scope of the gameplay. Westwood always manages to get fun into its games but the build-and-rush tactics of old are getting stale and it needs to move on. Despite the promise, only time will tell if Westwood is willing to budge from the formula that's put it where it is today.





# COUNTER-STRIKE: CONDITION ZERO

The best online game in the world is just about to fly solo. And we can hardly contain ourselves

■ Pub: Vivendi | Dev: Gearbox | ETA: September/October 2002

**GAMES SLIP ALL** the time but it doesn't get any easier to deal with, whether you're the man on the street waiting to pay cash or the reviewer off the street waiting to get it for free. When Randy Pitchford, head honcho of Gearbox Software, brought *Condition Zero* down a few months back it looked pretty polished to us and we were expecting review code to follow within 30 days. Instead we got the news that it had been put back to September/October, so, when we got to E3, one of the first things we did was storm up to the Gearbox stand and point a few fingers. Why was it delayed?

"We wanted to make it a bigger game. We had some really cool single-player narrative but it wasn't all the way." With

that Randy fired up a demo showing your typical CS-style gunfight. Suddenly a helicopter appeared, was hit, clipped a building and careered to the ground in the middle of the action. The next few minutes were a bit embarrassing.

Randy: This isn't a video, this is..."

ZONE: "Is this a cut-scene?"

Randy: "No, this is actually happening while you're down there playing."

And with that he cut to another demo where a bridge is hit by a rocket launcher, sending masonry flying out towards the CS players nearby.

ZONE: "So basically these are just animations?"

Randy (Patiently): "No, these actually happen in-game while you're playing."

**"We wanted to make it a bigger game. We had some cool single-player narrative but it wasn't all the way"**

ZONE: "So that rock will do you damage if it hits you?"

Randy: "Oh yeah, that stuff'll hurt. We decided to go full-crazy on the single-player narrative so we're spending all our time doing this and it's getting extraordinarily cool with loads of cinematic moments."

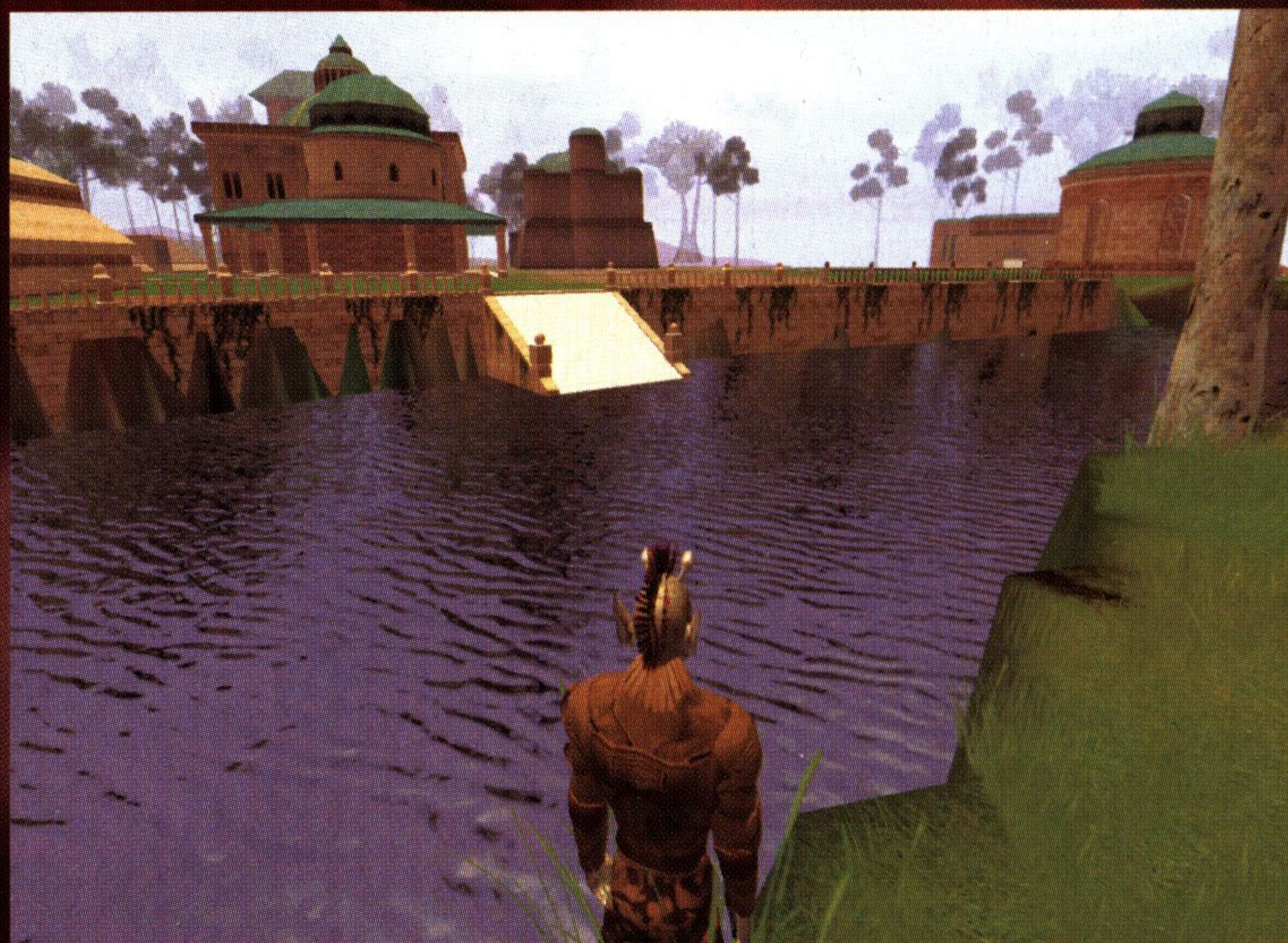
And the "moments" that we saw, along with the improved graphics and AI, have convinced us that when *Condition Zero* arrives it's going to rock the biggest bells the world has ever seen. We left Randy loading up the helicopter sequence again and muttering to himself: "It's moments like these... It's moments like these... It's moments like these..." Indeed.



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**"Using your Force powers will put you at risk, and if you're not careful you'll get Vader after you, or Boba Fett"**



# STAR WARS GALAXIES: AN EMPIRE DIVIDED

**It's time to choose sides in the greatest conflict of them all**

■ Pub: Sony Online Entertainment | Dev: Activision | ETA: December 2002 |

**DISPUTES OVER** *Attack Of The Clones* may have caused a galactic civil war of sorts in the ZONE office, but when it comes to *Star Wars Galaxies* we all agree – this is the greatest online game ever conceived. It may not be the best looking online RPG in development any more – that title now falling to stablemate *EverQuest II* – but it still looks phenomenal, it still promises to be the most epic and absorbing online world ever created and it's still the online game we'd want to play most even it wasn't *Star Wars*. And what's more, it is *Star Wars*.

The initial launch instalment of the game is now subtitled *An Empire Divided*, and will introduce players to the first eight or so planets in the *Galaxies* universe, with this number set to expand to at least 12 during the course of next year. The almost-beta build of the game we saw at E3 gave us a tantalising glimpse of the immense scope of the environments, as well as the diligence with which the developers have approached their task.

Creative director Raph Koster explains: "We've literally gone through the films and said, OK that's a cool set-piece in the film, let's just transplant it into the game, people

are going to want to see that. So you've got the city of Theed, the Gungan Sacred Place, the Mos Eisley Cantina, Jabba's Palace, the forests of Endor..."

Uh-huh, Ewoks, fine. Now get to the good stuff. "Yes, you can become a Jedi. Anyone has the potential to be a Jedi, but the path is different for every person – we want Jedi to be very rare and mysterious." Raph pauses to let an over-excited journalist get a grip of himself. "What we're talking about really is how to become force sensitive. We're never, if we can help it, going to reveal how to do so, but once you do you can train as a Jedi." It has to be

tricky, obviously, because every man and his droid will want to be a Jedi, and we can't all be masters of the Force. "Of course, while Jedi do kick ass, the other side to it is that you can fall to the dark side, and it's also going to be quite dangerous. Using your Force powers will put you at risk, and if you're not careful you'll get Vader after you, or Boba Fett."

Hear that? Become one with the Force and The Dark Lord of the Sith will recognise your power and hunt you down like the Jedi scum you are. If that doesn't convince you, we don't know what will. See you in the beta test.



# EVERQUEST II

**Like *EverQuest*, only better. We put on our fake beards and infiltrate Sony Online to find out more**

■ Pub: Sony Online Entertainment | Dev: Sony Online Entertainment | ETA: Q4 2003 |

**THERE'S A LETTER** in Mailbox this issue that accuses Verant and Sony Online Entertainment of mocking-up early *EverQuest II* screenshots in order to create a buzz about the game. Here's a brief snippet: "OK, about those screenshots of *EverQuest II*. I mean c'mon, what game do you know that has a playable environment that looks like that? Puh-leaze!". Fortunately, seeing the game running online at E3 shattered any misconceptions we might have shared. The game might be broadband-only but it looks as good as almost any offline game you can name, taking advantage of dynamic lighting (all objects cast shadows), bump-mapping and multi-layered texturing. All this and you're only going to need a GeForce 3 to play it.

Bill Trost, lead designer on *EverQuest II* seemed suitably impressed by our initial reactions to the game and decided to reveal a bit more about the player

characters, obviously the most important facet of any online RPG. "The variety of appearance options we're going to have is just outrageous." He then zoomed in on a close-up of a human female to prove the point, adding that motion capture is being used to finish the illusion of realism.

OK, we're sold on the graphics, what about the gameplay. Is it just *EQ* with more pixels-per-beard? "We want to make the game as accessible as possible. The only choice you're going to have to make when you first sign on to the game is what race you want to be. Also, we're going to be supporting more gameplay styles so the game's not going to be all about killing the biggest monster. That's going to be a very important part of it but we're also going to have other non-confrontational methods of earning experience and gaining advancements." We're in - pass the lute.



**"The only choice you're going to have to make when you first sign on to the game is what race you want to be"**



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**"Splinter Cell could be shaping up as one of the surprise hits of the year"**



# SPLINTER CELL

**A game packed with gritty realism, stealth and topped with a cryptic name? Better call for Clancy**

■ Pub: Ubi Soft | Dev: Ubi Soft | ETA: November 2002

**TAKE A LOOK** at the games we've picked out as our most exciting from E3. From the 12 that rocked our very beings to the core you've got a not-so-grand total of eight sequels and two, admittedly excellent-looking, film licences. It doesn't bode well for original ideas, although there's always an exception waiting to buck the trend.

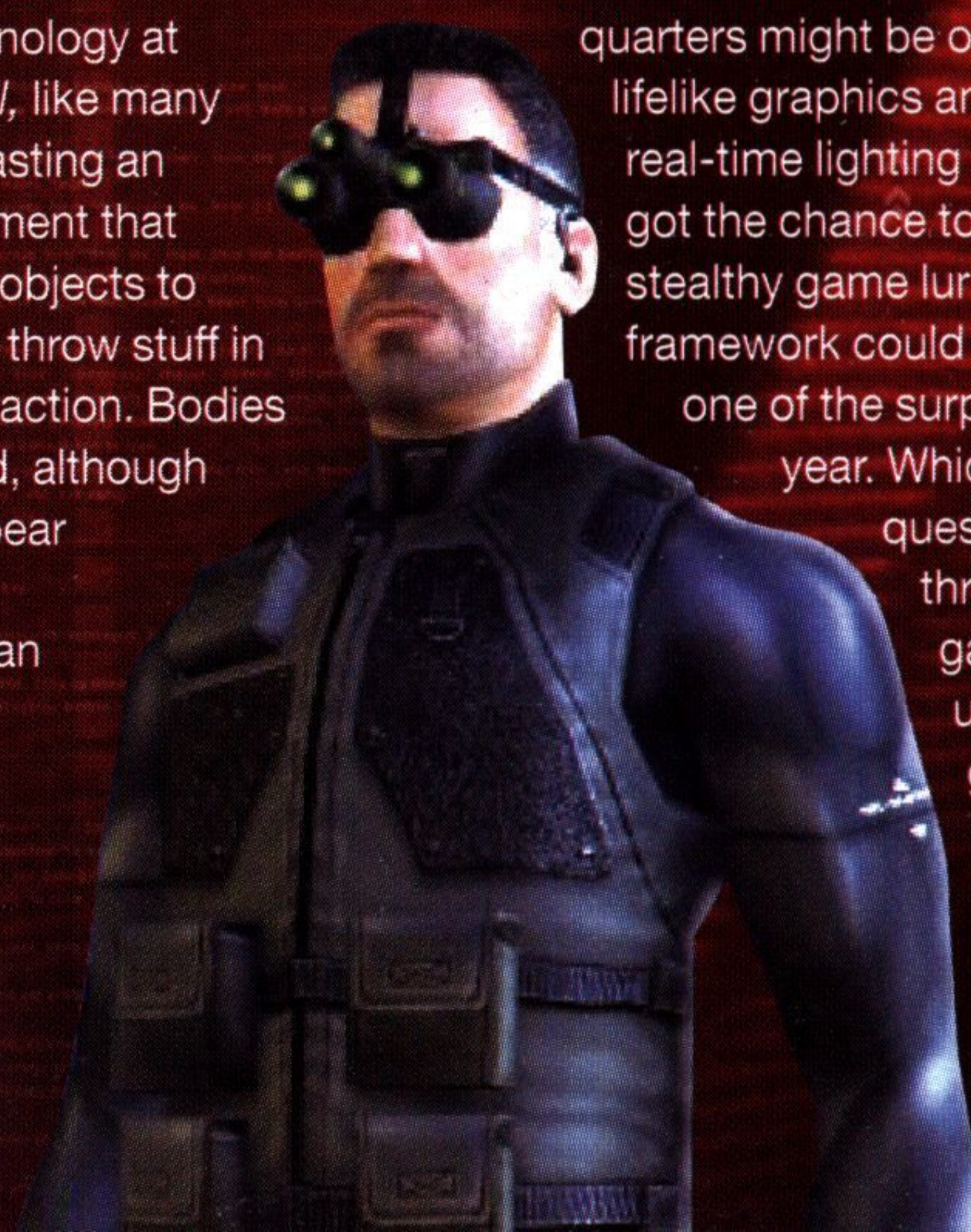
Sitting next to a huge screen showing the even-more-ample assets of Lara Croft for the entire duration of the show, *Splinter Cell* might not have turned as many heads but it's happy in the knowledge that it's quietly garnering the approval of almost everyone in the know.

We played through a couple of scenarios with Reid Schneider, senior producer on the game, who was keen to point out that although the game is an action/adventure, "we want to push the focus on stealth." He showed us some of the game's niftier tricks, such as the ability to shoot out lights, plunging the dynamic environment into a shadowy haven, and a couple of the game's gadgets, such as the stunner, useful for taking guards out silently, and the recon camera, which you can shoot onto a wall and use to look round corners.

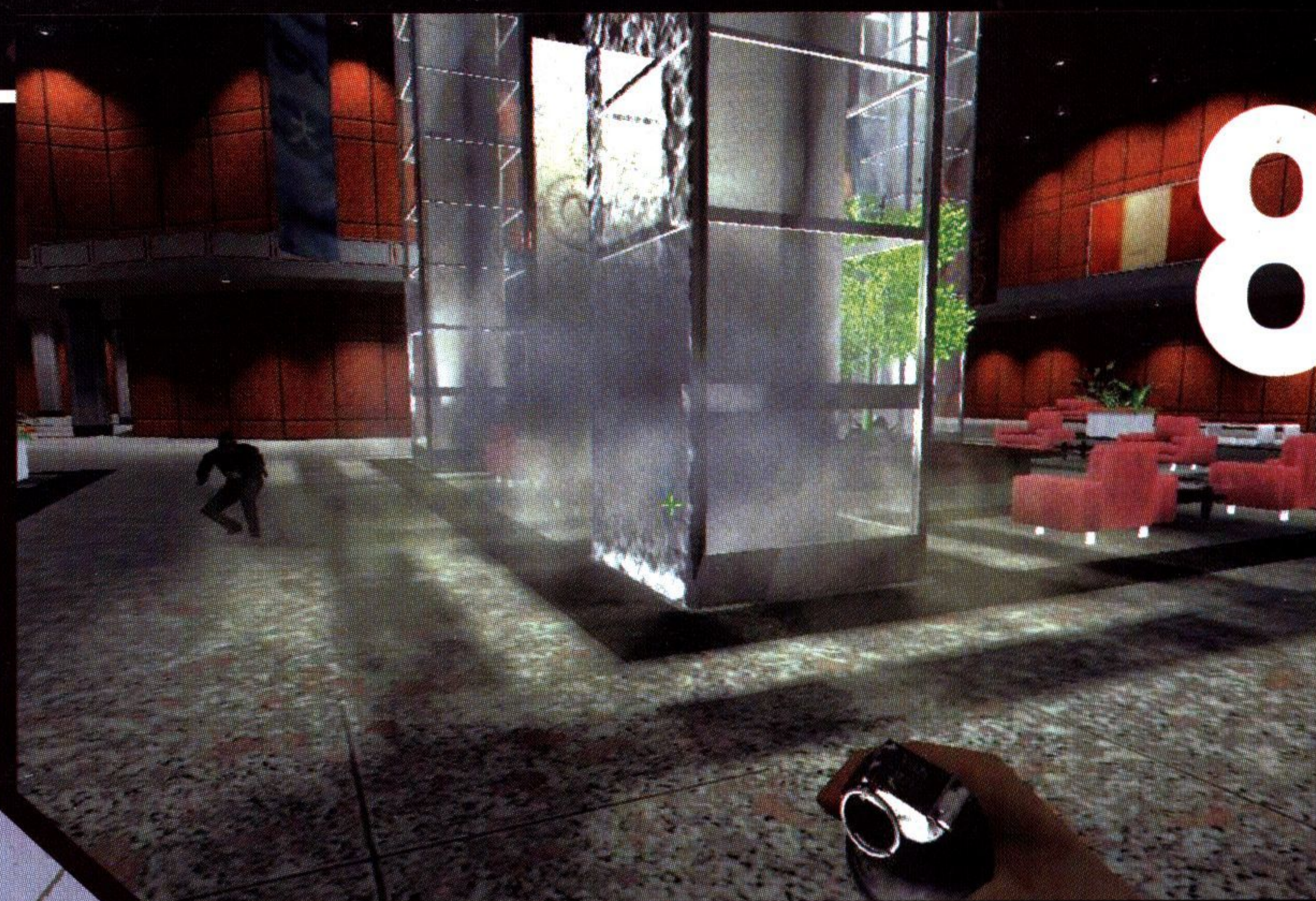
Some of the AI is in place as well, with suitably circumspect guards reacting in a

reasonably realistic manner. With the latest *Unreal* technology at the helm, *Splinter Cell*, like many other new titles is boasting an ultra-realistic environment that enables you to move objects to cast new shadows or throw stuff in order to create a distraction. Bodies can be lugged around, although they don't just disappear when you select that option. Instead you can see the body in your arms, and you move slower as you're dragging them away.

So, while the focus from most quarters might be on the amazingly lifelike graphics and dynamic real-time lighting effects, we got the chance to see that the stealthy game lurking behind the framework could be shaping up as one of the surprise hits of the year. Which just leaves one question: can you get through the whole game without unbuckling your gun? "If you're really good, yeah."







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# JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE

**Suave, sophisticated and a bit of a fanny magnet? The name's Bond**

■ Pub: Valve | Dev: Gearbox | ETA: Christmas 2002

**AFTER LAST MONTH'S** massive exclusive preview, we couldn't wait to get our hands on the latest playable code of the game everyone's been talking about, *James Bond 007: Nightfire*. And after fighting (almost to the death) among ourselves in order to get a go, we can officially proclaim that it's looking every bit as good as we hoped it would.

While we waited impatiently for our turn, we spoke to project director Landon Montgomery, and asked him a bit about the game's character.

"The player will interact with several characters throughout *Nightfire* – some helpful and some not so helpful. But as an MI6 agent, Bond generally acts as a lone wolf sent in to single-handedly take care of those messy situations that would normally require an entire covert team." So how about the villains? Anyone we'll recognise from the films? "*Nightfire* features an original storyline that has been developed in collaboration with MGM/Danjaq, so most villains and characters will feel fresh to fans of Bond."

Playing *Nightfire* proved to be an exhilarating experience, with many ways of approaching each level. During his go, Dave used stealth tactics (aided by a pair of night vision sunglasses) to negotiate his way round wandering patrol men, cunningly utilising a knock-out dart-firing fountain pen to silently immobilise his

foes. Hill on the other hand, piled in with a customary lack of caution, unloading countless clips into walls, the floor and other random pieces of scenery from his SG5 Commando (*Nightfire* will feature over 20 weapons in all), before being gunned down like a rabid dog. A more co-ordinated man would have succeeded.

Landon promised us that in the finished product, you'll get to travel to ten exotic locations around the world, in your quest to prevent evil criminal mastermind Rafael Drake from achieving world domination. He was also keen to stress how the PC version will differ from its console counterparts. "The PC version of *Nightfire* is focusing solely on providing a solid FPS experience. It's what Gearbox knows best and it's what's been found lacking in the last few Bond titles on the consoles. Both versions (console and PC) are interpreting and executing the *Nightfire* storyline from two different angles and will offer people very different experiences. I think the PC version is most likely to appeal to fans of the FPS genre while the console versions are following in the footsteps of *Agent Under Fire*, and as such are incorporating driving missions into their mix."

Gearbox has one of the best records in the PC gaming world, and believe us, once *Nightfire* is finished, it looks like it's going to be one hell of a ride.

**"The PC version of *Nightfire* is focusing solely on providing a solid FPS experience"**





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Expect to see diverse locations including a bank heist in London, replete with red phone boxes and double-deckers.



# RAINBOW SIX: RAVEN SHIELD

We still don't know what a Raven Shield is. Any ideas anyone?

■ Pub: Ubi Soft | Dev: Ubi Soft | ETA: Christmas 2002

**WHEN IT COMES** to tactical shooters it's a given that they don't come better than the *Rainbow Six* series. But, despite the hyper-realistic settings, weaponry and scenarios in previous outings, just how good is it if you have to control a man who can only shoot from three positions: standing, lying or squatting. Why can't you position yourself accurately below an object so that you can aim your weapon at someone's skull without exposing yourself? This is just one of the problems that's been addressed in *Raven Shield*. You can also use your mouse wheel to open and shut doors slowly and silently, and although you might think that these sound like minor tweaks, the extra immersion and gameplay possibilities they bring up are infinite.

The new *Unreal* engine complements these little tweaks perfectly. In action the game looks hyper-fluid and everything, down to the death animations, are real-time and completely unpredictable. And, in a bid to make the game as realistic as possible, the developers have employed SWAT officer Mike Grasso to oversee all the weapons and their effects. (Mike's spent 20 years in the LAPD, so don't go and tell him he looks like Hank from *The Larry Sanders Show*.)

The developers also demanded that flashbangs and gas grenades were chunked at them so that they could experience what it's like first-hand. A bit beyond the call of duty you might think, but what's a little temporary deafness when you've got a game this damn good?



**"Mike Grasso's spent 20 years in the LAPD, so don't go and tell him he looks like Hank from *The Larry Sanders Show*"**



# COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

# 10

**Gear up and get ready for the best racing game of the year**

■ Pub: Codemasters | Dev: Codemasters | ETA: Christmas 2002

**IT'S NOT OFTEN** a racing game really catches our attention, but the *Colin McRae* games have always proved exceptions to that rule. While we were gliding round the Codemasters stand (we were still fresh and keen at this point), we were taken aback by just how much this third instalment in the series stood out from the all the other racers at the show. So we promptly accosted studio head and producer of the game, Guy Wilday, and bombarded him with questions to find out more.

First off we wanted to know exactly what's changed since *CMR2*, apart from the graphics (there are 14,000 polygons in each car as opposed to 800 in *CMR2*) which are looking little short of stunning.

"With *CMR2* we enhanced the original game, which had set the agenda and defined rally sport games. It was all about bigger, better, faster. For *CMR3*, we're taking the graphics and physics to a level we've always wanted. However, the main point about *CMR3* is that we've been working with Colin and the Ford team for many years, and go out on the rallies with them, so we get to appreciate the excitement of the whole event. What we want to capture in *CMR3* is that event experience," claimed Guy proudly. A few

quick (if cack-handed) laps round one of the eight stunningly replicated real-life courses confirmed they're well on the way to achieving this.

Probably the most notable technical enhancement is evident in the game's physics, which are feeling even more realistic than before, and it was a constant battle to keep the car under control on the slippery and loose surfaces. Despite this, *CMR3* seemed to retain all of the entertainment elements of its predecessors. We asked Guy if this was a conscious decision.

"The physics are much more detailed and complex than before. Part of the success of the previous games has been the balance between realism (in-car handling for example) and the fictional element (such as the stage design) which makes it a very rounded, wholly playable game. We'll never lose sight of the fact that people want gripping entertainment from this game." Which is good to hear.

Of course the *Colin McRae* games have always been known for their excellent driving model; this time the game recreates every other aspect of a real rally season as well. We're left with little choice but to declare *Colin McRae Rally 3* the best driving game of E3.

**"Realistic physics make it a constant battle to keep the car under control on the slippery and loose surfaces"**





BEST OF THE REST

AGE OF MYTHOLOGY



Not much graphically but the game is going to make up for it.

DEUS EX 2: INVISIBLE WAR



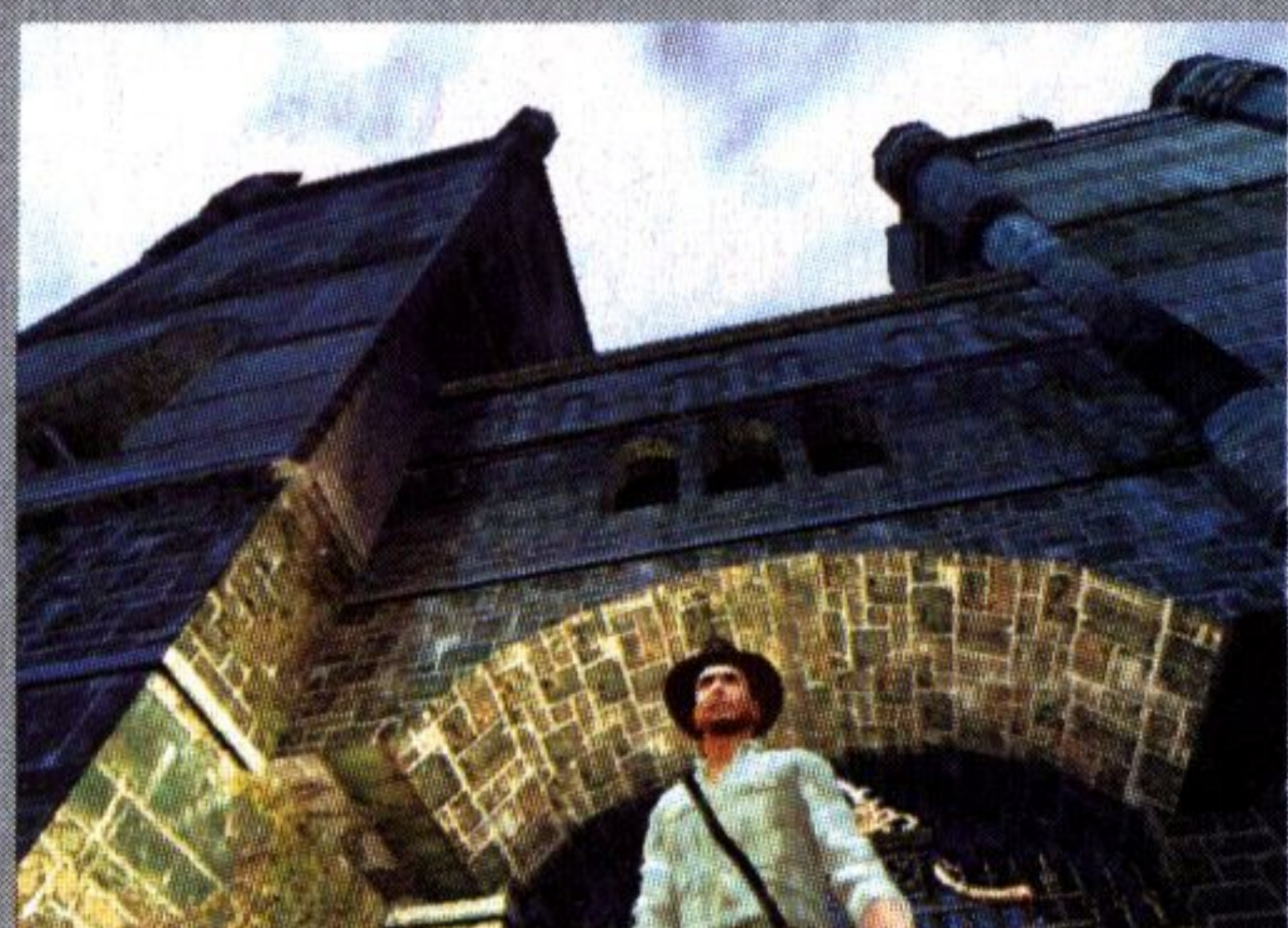
Not much on show at E3 but this is definitely one to watch.

STAR TREK: ELITE FORCE II



The sequel to one of our favourite shooters is looking good.

INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB



Indy and his trusty whip back in action once again.

KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC



Bioware and a Star Wars RPG. You know you can't go far wrong.

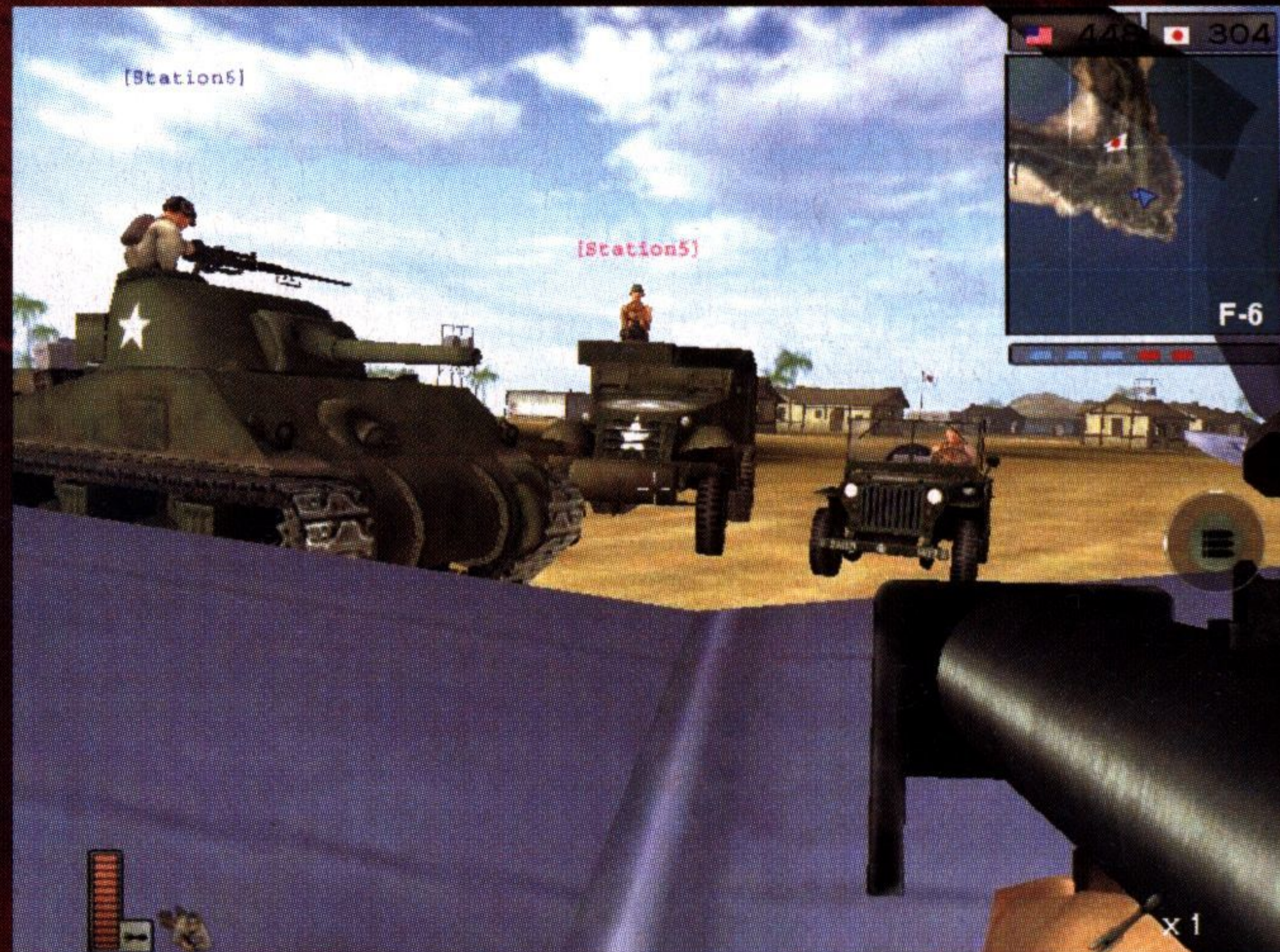
LORD OF THE RINGS



The game of the film of the year.



Games should be fun and we enjoyed ourselves more playing this than any other game at E3 (apart from *Ms Pac-Man* back at our hotel).



# BATTLEFIELD 1942

Total battlefield action: your next online addiction starts here

■ Pub: EA | Dev: Digital Illusions CE | ETA: September 13

**“A superb combination of simplicity of design and ambition of execution”**

**WATCHING A DEVELOPER** shift his weight nervously as he tries to let you know you've overstayed your welcome on his demo machine is never a comfortable moment, but it's one we suffered gladly in the EA booth at E3, having secured a place in a networked session of the brilliant *Battlefield 1942*. Though sitting a notch below the best E3 shooters in terms of graphics, the multiplayer-focused action/shooter was a definite contender for most enjoyable game at E3.

The genius of *1942* lies in its superb combination of simplicity of design and ambition of execution. You enter the battleground as a basic foot soldier, armed with anything from a sniper rifle to a rocket launcher, and from there you can jump into any of 35 air, sea and land vehicles. Grab a jeep, a tank or lumbering bomber plane, man a fixed-gun

emplacement, defend a battleship against waves of oncoming fighters, or simply run sabotage missions with a bulging sack of explosives.

Rather than the hardcore war simulation it could have been, *1942* opts for a pick-up-and-play arcade sensibility that puts the focus firmly back on fun and frantic competition. Such is the superb balance of the game that whether you're strafing enemy barracks from the snug confines of a Spitfire or sitting atop a guard tower nursing a shoulder-mounted boomstick, it seems like you've got the best seat in the house.

On current form *1942* appears to be a classic in the making, and with three months of fine-tuning still in front of it there seems little doubt that it will wind up being a multiplayer favourite for many years to come.





**"Appeals to fans of both freeform and linear story-driven space combat sims"**



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# FREELANCER

**The evolution of the space combat sim is nearly upon us**

■ Microsoft | Dev: Digital Anvil CE | ETA: December 2002

**IT'S NO SECRET** that this is one game we've been truly excited about ever since we first saw it. Admittedly, that was three E3s ago, but seeing it again now just shows how ahead of its time it was all those years ago. We managed to catch up with program manager Jorg Neumann for a hands-on demonstration of the latest code.

The mouse-only control interface (don't worry, you will be able to use a joystick if you so wish) is nothing short of inspired, and takes all of three seconds to get used to. Jorg was quick to point out Digital Anvil's reasons for making *Freelancer* predominantly mouse-driven.

"We feel that it's hindering the whole genre of space combat games to just have a joystick as a mode of control. The basic principle of using the mouse in

combat is that wherever you can click, you can shoot." Believe us, this isn't just a gimmick, it really does work.

The true beauty of *Freelancer*, though, is its ability to appeal to fans of both freeform and linear story-driven space combat sims. A massive ever-evolving universe, rammed to bursting point with pirates, traders, police and numerous factions provide all the exploration opportunities you could wish for, and plenty of chances of loot credits and cargo in order to upgrade your ship. It was quite clear that action is never far away even if you simply decide to set course for the nearest star in search of adventure.

However, do away with all of this, and there's still a 40-hour mission-based saga to be unravelled, one which throws up numerous intriguing twists throughout its

carefully crafted plot, that'll have you guessing to the very last mission (at least that's what Jorg told us). "We have more than two and a half hours of pre-rendered cut-scenes and the story is structured in a way so that you can get in and out of it whenever you want to," boasted Jorg before playing us *Freelancer*'s impressive and mysterious five-minute intro.

What's more, as you can probably see from the screenshots, *Freelancer* is not looking too shabby graphically either, which is somewhat surprising considering how long it's been in development. In fact in terms of an overall package, there were few other titles which impressed us more, so just keep your fingers crossed that Digital Anvil can actually stick to this, the latest in a line of 4,274 scheduled release dates.

## BEST OF THE REST

### MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR



One of the best strategy titles on show but edged by *C&C: Generals*.

### PLANETSIDE



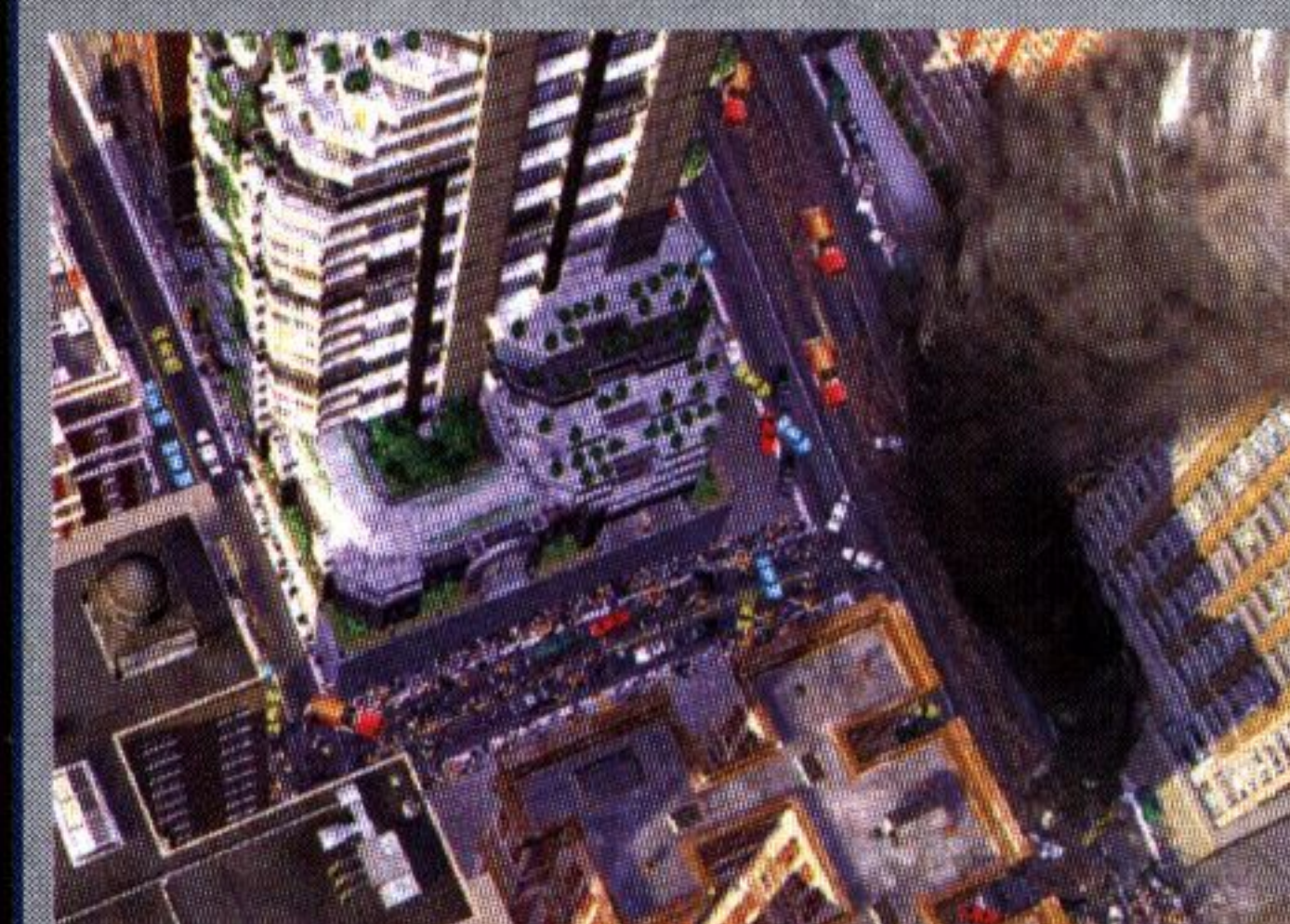
Another multiplayer gem from Sony and the world's first MMOFPS.

### REPUBLIC: THE REVOLUTION



One of the most ambitious strategy games to date is still on track.

### SIM CITY 4



Make a city happy or miserable. It's your choice Mr Mayor.

### THE THING



Be afraid. Be very afraid. The Thing could be anywhere and anyone.

### WORLD OF WARCRAFT



One of the most stunning online games on show, but still a way off.



# DARK HORSES OF E3

We dug a bit deeper at E3 to find eight of the most promising games your Mum's never heard of

**IF YOUR GAME** hasn't got a number after it or a Texan developer behind it then chances are the general public isn't interested. (Unless of course you've got a dodgy licence on board, in which case a ropery has-been celeb will be enough to pack in a few desperate punters – see opening spread.)

But what of the true heroes? The developers who pack their PCs onto cargo ships three months before the show starts because they can't afford the air fare, just to face the humiliation of sitting in a darkened booth in a lonely corner of the convention centre while all around jubilant noises and pyrotechnics are kicking off?

Behind the razzle lie some gaming gems, ignored by most but championed here by the people's magazine. You might not recognise any of them, hell you might never hear of them again, but they turned our alcohol-soaked heads all the same and we reckon they could just be brilliant. Here they are, The Dark Horses of E3.



Anywhere you can see in the game you can go, even if it is half a mile away.

## FAR CRY

■ Pub: Ubi Soft | Dev: Crytek | ETA: TBA

**AFTER LAST** year's E3, one of the games we recognised as a dark horse was an ambitious offering with the working title *X-Isle: Dinosaur Island*. Little more than a tech demo at the time, the game has now re-emerged as island-hopping FPS *Far Cry*. Sadly, the stunning dinosaurs of yesteryear have gone, but the game remains just as technically impressive, offering some of the most expansive and detailed outdoor environments ever seen in an FPS.

Rather than your standard all-American hero, *Far Cry* puts you in the skin of a peaceable seafarer living a simple life in the islands of the Pacific. Needless to say, you soon run into the

obligatory trouble with high-tech mercenaries, and are forced to fight for your life on a series of small islands, with nothing but your wits, stealth, a bunch of guns and a variety of vehicles such as quad-bikes and speedboats to save you.

The most impressive thing about the game is the sheer scale of the proceedings, which take place in a single environment many virtual square miles in size and offering a good half-mile line of sight. The dense and detailed jungle terrain has been designed with tactical play in mind, even offering the ability to spot enemies by the movement of vegetation or the fleeing of disturbed animals. Don't turn your back on this one.

## SHINING LORE

■ Pub: Phantagram | Dev: Phantagram | ETA: Q4 2002

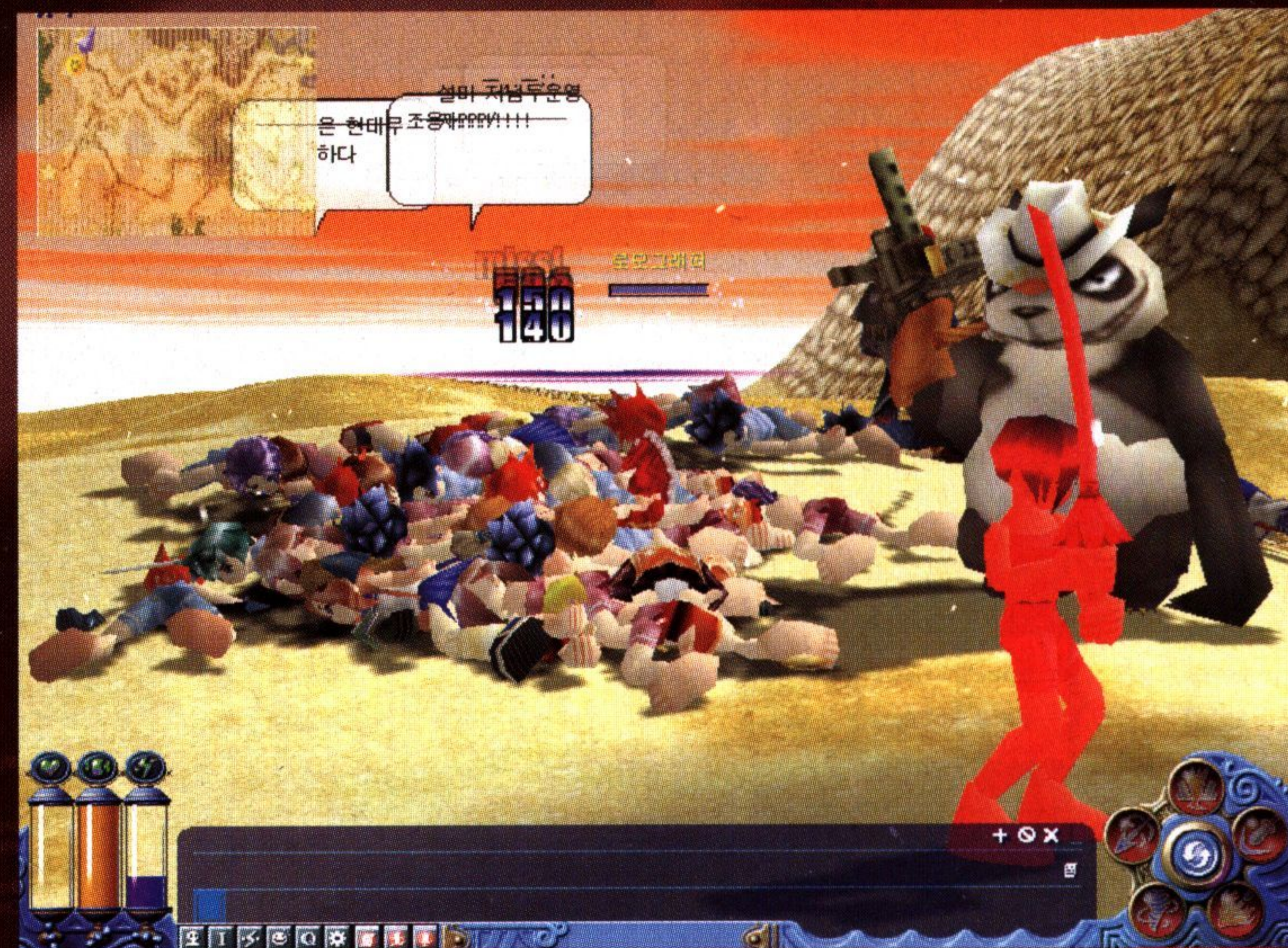
**WHILE A** great deal of the buzz at E3 centred around the elevation of *The Sims* to an online phenomenon, there was one game that for us outshone the staid suburban antics of Will Wright's little computer people, and that was Phantagram's impossibly charming 'MMORPG for everyone', *Shining Lore*.

Combining the simplicity and charisma of *Phantasy Star Online* (as well as building on its idea of a universal chat system) with an evolving *Final Fantasy*-esque storyline and unrivalled community-building elements, the principle genius of *Shining Lore* is that it

recognises the fact that MMORPGs are often little more than glorified chat rooms and runs with it.

While everyone was hooting about the peaceful social interactions encouraged by *The Sims Online* (which bases your achievements on your ability to entertain others), you can do most of the same community-based activities in *Shining Lore*, as well as going on quests, collecting treasure and killing pandas in samurai suits.

Of course it will probably never take off outside of the Far East, but don't say we didn't try.



The in-game chat translator will make sure your screen never looks like this.





*Breed* started life as a space sim, so expect plenty of orbital action.

## BREED

■ Pub: CDV | Dev: Brat Designs | ETA: Christmas

**WE KNOW** we've raved about *Breed* before, but this most ambitious of strategic FPSs was looking better than ever at E3, and we couldn't resist squeezing in another mention. It may also seem strange that we still rate the game as a dark horse, but despite our best efforts it's still a relative unknown to most of the gaming community. What's more, it seems the only way to get people to take notice is to compare it to the very game its developers would rather we didn't mention.

"Cosmetically, everyone says *Breed* looks like *Halo*," says Jason Gee, one of the founders of UK developer Brat Designs, "but as soon as you get into the game and see how it works, you'll realise that there's much more variation involved in *Breed*. It's much more tactical."

In fact, with its combination of squad-based tactics and vehicular action, Jason

cites *Operation Flashpoint* as a much closer analogue. "It has a similar openness and sense of scale. Although *Breed*'s environments are much bigger." He's not kidding, as some of the game's futuristic island locations are an unbelievable 256 miles in diameter.

Add to this the ability to transition smoothly between ground-based action and fully realised space combat and you start to get some measure of the ambition behind this title.



## DUALITY

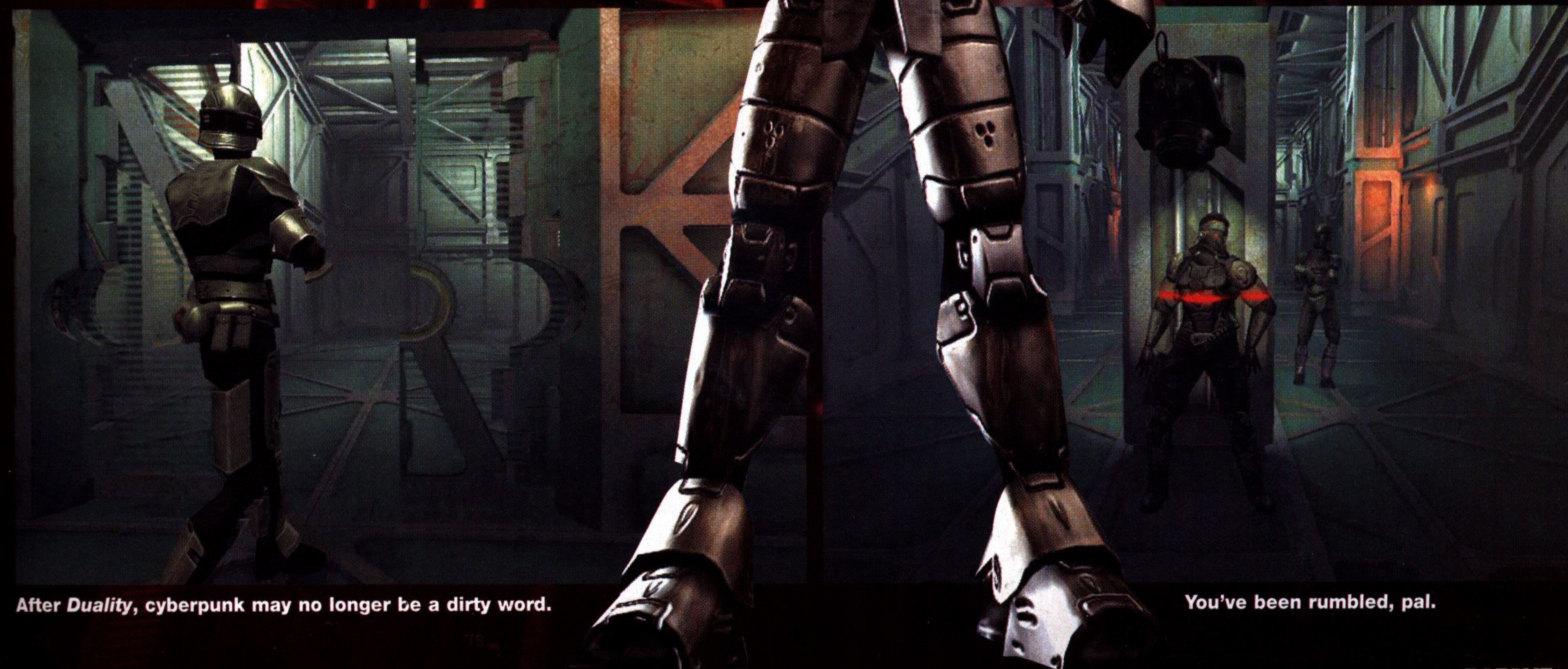
■ Pub: Phantagram | Dev: Trilobite Graphics | ETA: Q1 2003

**"WE ARE** making sure that this is a *Metal Gear Solid* killer. Not to compete against it or get near to it – kill it off entirely." Them's fighting words, I think you'll agree. It's a bullish statement from Phantagram's Gavin Matheson, whose confidence in cyberpunk action-adventure *Duality* you might just share once you've seen it in action.

While not actually playable at the show, the rolling demo seen at E3 brought the same word to the lips of almost every punter we saw wandering through the Phantagram booth: "Cool". And we'd have to agree. The dark urban future in the game tips its hat towards just about every cyberpunk mainstay you can think of (*Neuromancer*, *The Matrix*,

*Ghost In The Shell*), but still manages to come off looking distinctive and incredibly slick.

To be honest though, the *Metal Gear Solid* comparison is slightly misplaced, as only a third of the game is likely to resemble the stealth action favourite. *Duality*'s three characters – the mercenary, hacker and virtual being – each offer very different styles of gameplay, and while stealth is one of these, there's also plenty of strategic play, puzzle solving, and *Matrix*-like action in the game's cyberspace. Definitely cool.



After *Duality*, cyberpunk may no longer be a dirty word.

You've been rumbled, pal.

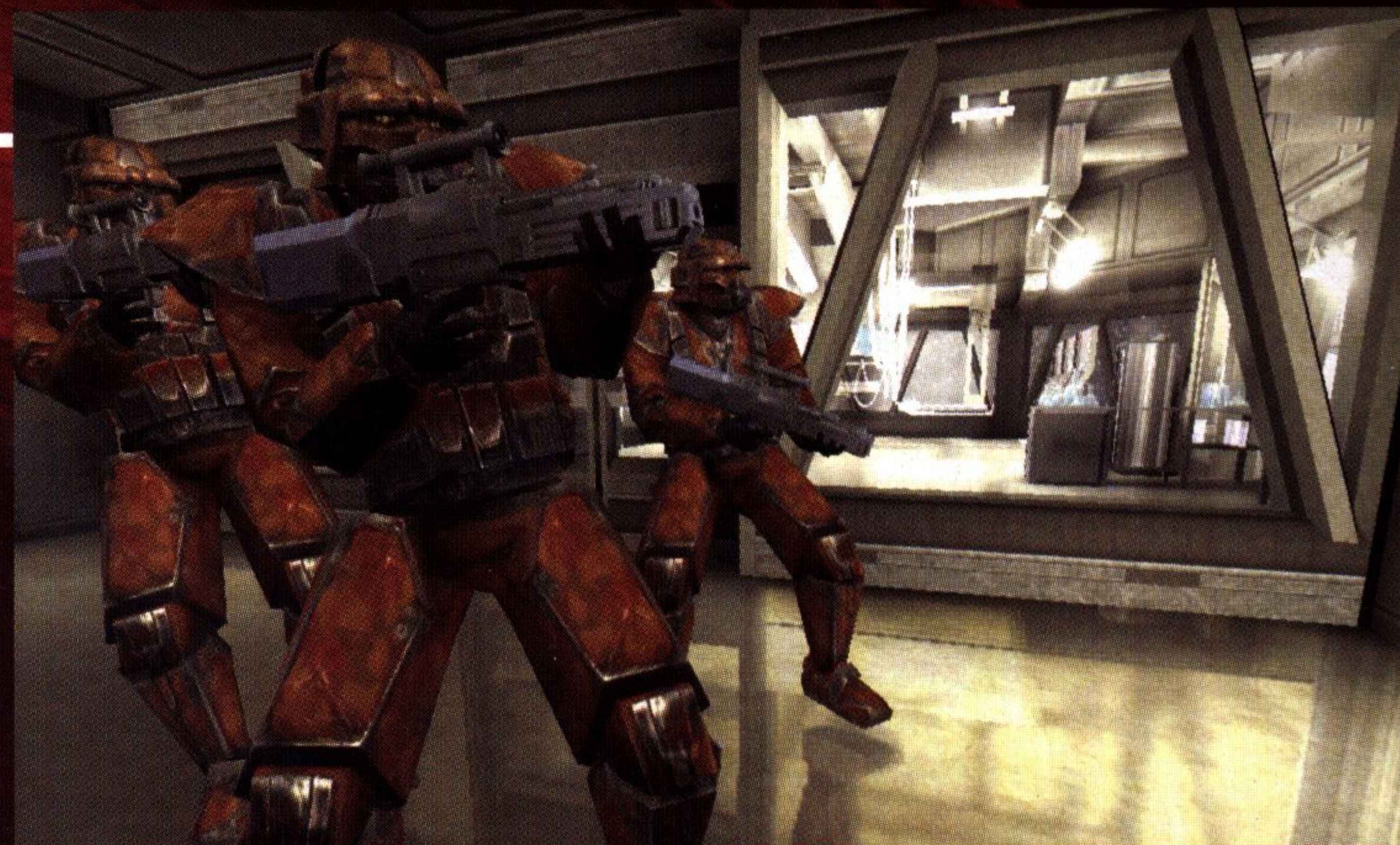


# PHANTOM CRASH

■ Pub: Phantagram | Dev: Genki | ETA: 2003

**IN TERMS** of pure arcade fun, few games at E3 could come close to Genki's gorgeous *Phantom Crash*. A cybernetic hybrid of *Virtual On* and *Quake III*, *Phantom Crash* is a frantic first- and third-person shooter that puts you inside a variety of heavily armed robot suits called Scoobees. The action takes place in a ruined version of a futuristic Tokyo, and essentially involves scoobing around, blasting anything that moves and attempting to out-maneuvre rival man-bots. Not the most original concept perhaps, but certainly one of the most enjoyable.

*Phantom Crash* also sets itself apart with its polished looks, abundant special effects and depth of control, as well as neat touches like the *Predator*-style stealth mode. The Xbox version we played at the show was plenty of fun, though it was let down by a lack of mouse and keyboard control. Once it's running on a PC though, it will be a different story, especially with the 32-player network support. The playfield will also be hugely expanded, with a full-scale replica of inner Tokyo to bust up, plus additional indoor and underground areas. Unless you'd rather play a management game of course.



After playing a bit of *Chaser* we can only advise you to get your ass to Mars.

## CHASER

■ Pub: JoWood | Dev: Cauldron | ETA: October

**THE NEW** *Doom* engine has been revealed to general gobsmackdom, *Unreal II* and *UT 2003* are looking thoroughly fantastic – all great news for us, not so great for the many smaller fish in the FPS pond. There are now only a handful of shooters in development by small-name teams (not reliant on licensed graphics tech) that have any hope of competing against the big boys: *Breed*, perhaps GSC's *Stalker: Oblivion Lost* and certainly Slovakian codeshop Cauldron's *Chaser*.

We caught up with the latest build of *Chaser* at the big show (the first chance

we've had to actually play the game), and found a straightforward run-and-gun shooter with a dark sci-fi aesthetic and a plot cribbed from *Total Recall*. Whether you consider these familiar elements to be a boon or a curse may be a matter of taste, but we certainly had a good time fragging through the first couple of levels.

On a side note, the developers might want to rethink a few of their wall textures, which boasted more than one offensive racial slur amongst the scrawled graffiti. (Note for future reference: always take a translator when collecting post-apocalyptic images in downtown Bradford.)



Mecha combat has never looked so good.



More guns, more real-time cutlass action, no parrots on shoulders.

## SEA DOGS II

■ Pub: Bethesda | Dev: Akella | ETA: 2003

**WE'VE ALREADY** attracted the ire of ELSPA recently with our rather 'unconventional' views on piracy, but we hope they don't mind us getting behind this latest piratical escapade, because it looks bloody gorgeous. The original *Sea Dogs* (released in the US ages ago but here only recently) was a seafaring RPG famously described by PC ZONE as 'a good game with some not-so-good bits', a criticism that nautical RPG specialist Akella has happily taken on board for their sequel.

To this end, the confusing plot structure of the original game has been thoroughly keelhaunched, the multiple

quests ditched in favour of a single coherent storyline, to be complemented by a random quest generator. More of the gameplay will now take place on land in an attempt to make the game more familiar to traditional RPGers, though you can still spend all your time at sea if you desire. Gun battles have been added to your repertoire, as well as a new ship-boarding system and small-party based option for 'dry' quests.

However, the game really comes alive when you're out at sea, where the incredible water effects, rolling waves and real-time weather system all combine to magnificent effect. Just one piece of advice: steer clear if hungover.



# AQUANOX: REVELATION

■ Pub: JoWood | Dev: Massive Development | ETA: September

A **STANDALONE** game but not exactly a true sequel, *Revelation* is the successor to the beautiful but disappointing underwater shooter that took Germany by storm. "In Germany we have great success, only *Max Payne* sold more than *Aquanox*." So says Ingo Frick, technical

director on the project, as we resist the temptation to tell him that in England that's not a selling point. Instead we relaxed into the aquamarine ambience of *Aquanox*'s visuals, disturbed only by the "music in the style of Nu Metal like Limp Bizkit and Slipknot." Sick.

So why should *Revelation* be any better? Basically the designers read all their bad press and went back to fix their errors, which is how things should be. Like the first game the action sequences play like a first-person shooter, but there's been a shift from spamming the player

with lots of enemy grunts to having fewer, more intelligent enemies. Likewise, the game has gone from offering 80 characters and lots of stupid dialogue to 12 characters (and much better voice-acting). Hopefully this will make for a more compact, well-paced playing experience.



There's a darker, less cartoonish feel this time.



The new AI brings a more strategic pace to combat.



Basically, it's the game *Aquanox* should have been.

## THE GAME THAT WASN'T THERE

Another year, another gaping void in many publishers' portfolios. Where is it then, asks **Steve Hill**

### DUKE NUKEM FOREVER

The development equivalent of painting the Forth bridge, *Duke Nukem Forever* will never actually be finished, as by the time they get to the end they'll have to start again with yet another new engine. Christ knows what they're actually doing down there in Texas, although we would imagine it involves line dancing, shooting animals, and inter-generational sex. This year's E3 offered no evidence to the contrary.

### HALF-LIFE 2

No one was expecting it and any appearance would certainly have grabbed the headlines. It's a shame there was nothing to see, as it would have at least stopped everyone banging on about *Doom III* on the basis of a ten-minute film of some bloke ambling along a corridor.

### TEAM FORTRESS 2: BROTHERHOOD OF ARMS

To be honest, there was more chance of *Brotherhood of Man* showing up than catching a sniff of the sequel to the rapidly ageing squad 'em up. Mind you, nobody seemed that upset. Valve did at least go on record just prior to E3 to say that the game was still in development, and that they are 'very close to showing it again'.



### HIDDEN & DANGEROUS 2

With the official website still boasting screenshots from last year's E3, we have to express fears for this habitual absentee. Dangerous? Maybe. Hidden? Definitely.



### FULL THROTTLE 2

A reminder of an earlier age, the original *Full Throttle* represents a time when adventure games involved reading, and LucasArts stood for quality, as opposed to second-rate *Star Wars* merchandise. But aside from a short and particularly unenlightening teaser video, there was no sign of the recently announced sequel at E3. According to president Simon Jeffery, "*Full Throttle* is one of LucasArts' greatest and most beloved original games. We can't think of a better brand to lead LucasArts' charge into a new era of original game development."

So where in the name of Christendom is it?

- a) It's out next year
- b) We've only just thought of it
- c) Use the pantyhose on the spatchcock



### MAX PAYNE 2

With talk of a film in the offing (believe it when we see it), this year's E3 would have been a perfect time for Rockstar Games to showcase the sequel ahead of its alleged 2003 release. So was it there? Was it bollocks. A press release confirming its existence was all we came away with. Stop pretending to be rock stars and do some work.

### CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 4

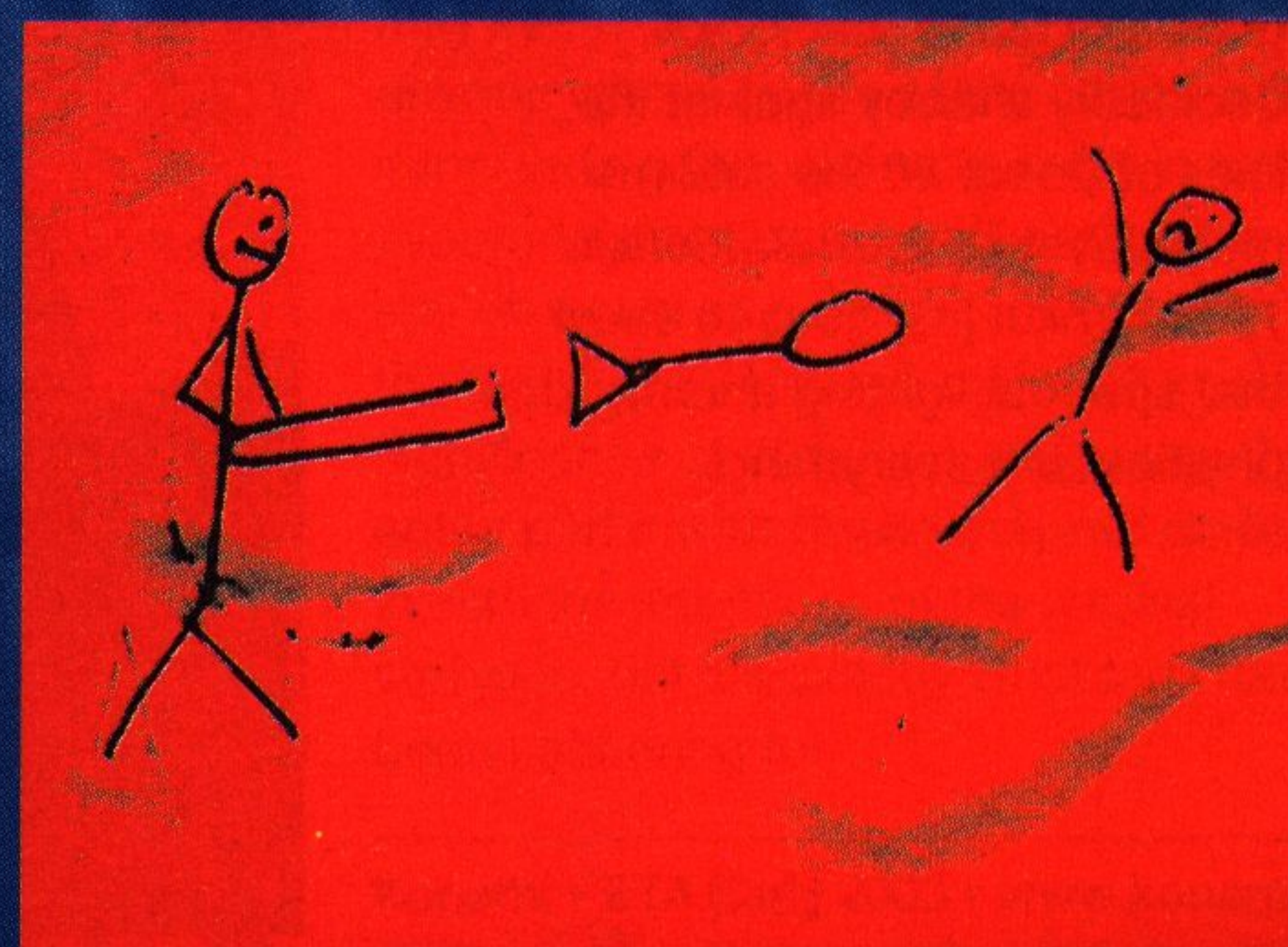
According to Sports Interactive's MD, there are 100,000 people in America playing *Championship Manager*, mainly through illicit warez sites. SI is seeking to capitalise on this, but didn't consider E3 an appropriate platform for CM4. Amid the throbbing graphical gristle of *Deus Ex 2* and *Tomb Raider Whatever*, the appearance of a glorified spreadsheet would certainly have confused the non-believers.

### COUNTER-STRIKE 2

"Hahahahaaaahahaha!" This was the response we received when we asked the PR man for Valve when we were likely to see this mega-sequel. We know it's in development, so quit laughing and start talking.

### QUAKE IV

Not a chance. Though now that we've seen the new *Doom* engine, we can at least imagine what it looks like. Here's some exclusive concept art.







# BULLETIN

## SHOW OF STRENGTH



■ NEWS EDITOR Anthony Holden

▲ The yearly games blowout that is E3 has been and gone for another year, and we've all had plenty of time to reflect on the event away from the relentless noise and hype of the show floor. And hopefully our massive 20-page E3 special (starting on page 8), in favour of which we've sacrificed most of the bulletin section this month, will allow you to do likewise.

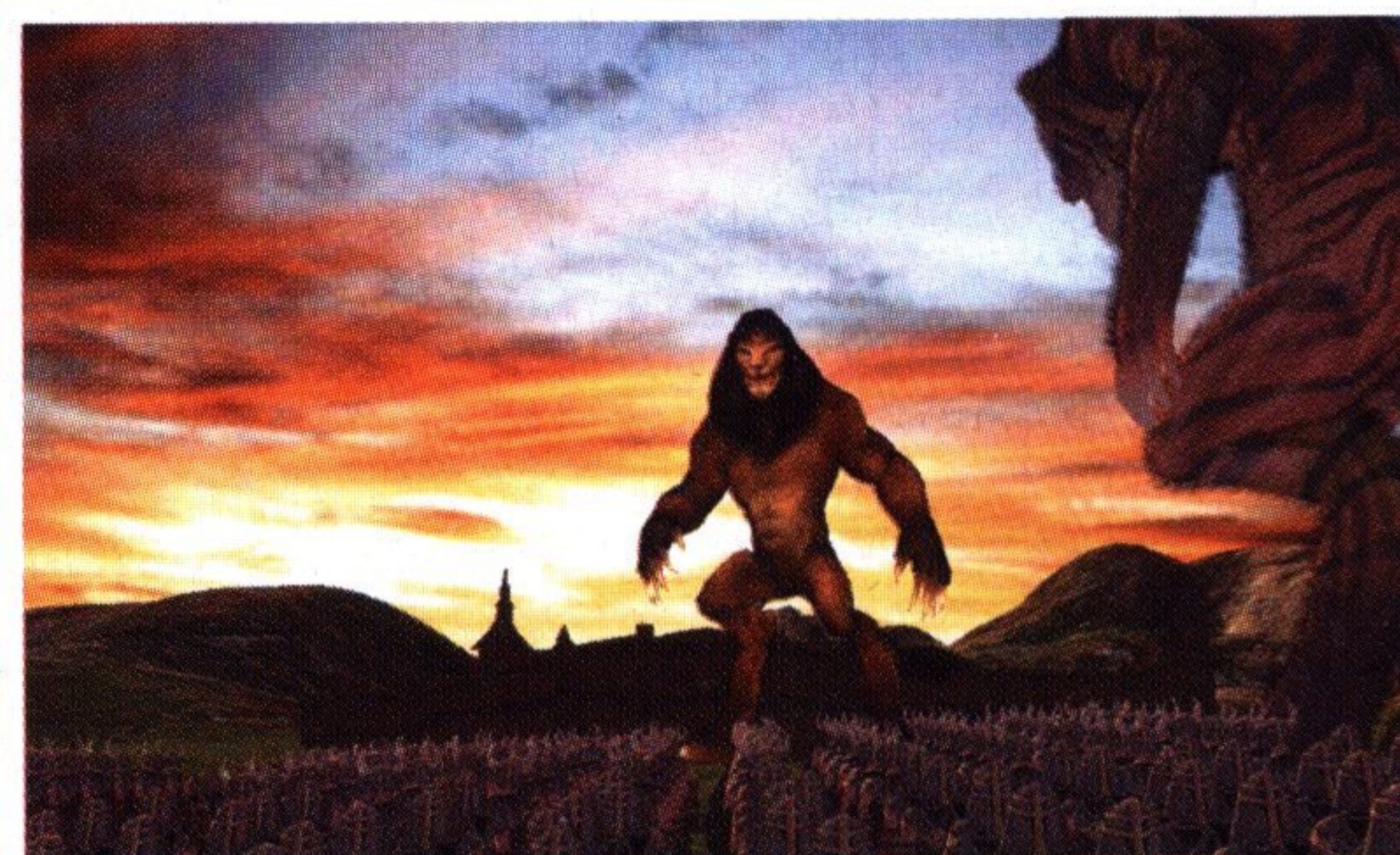
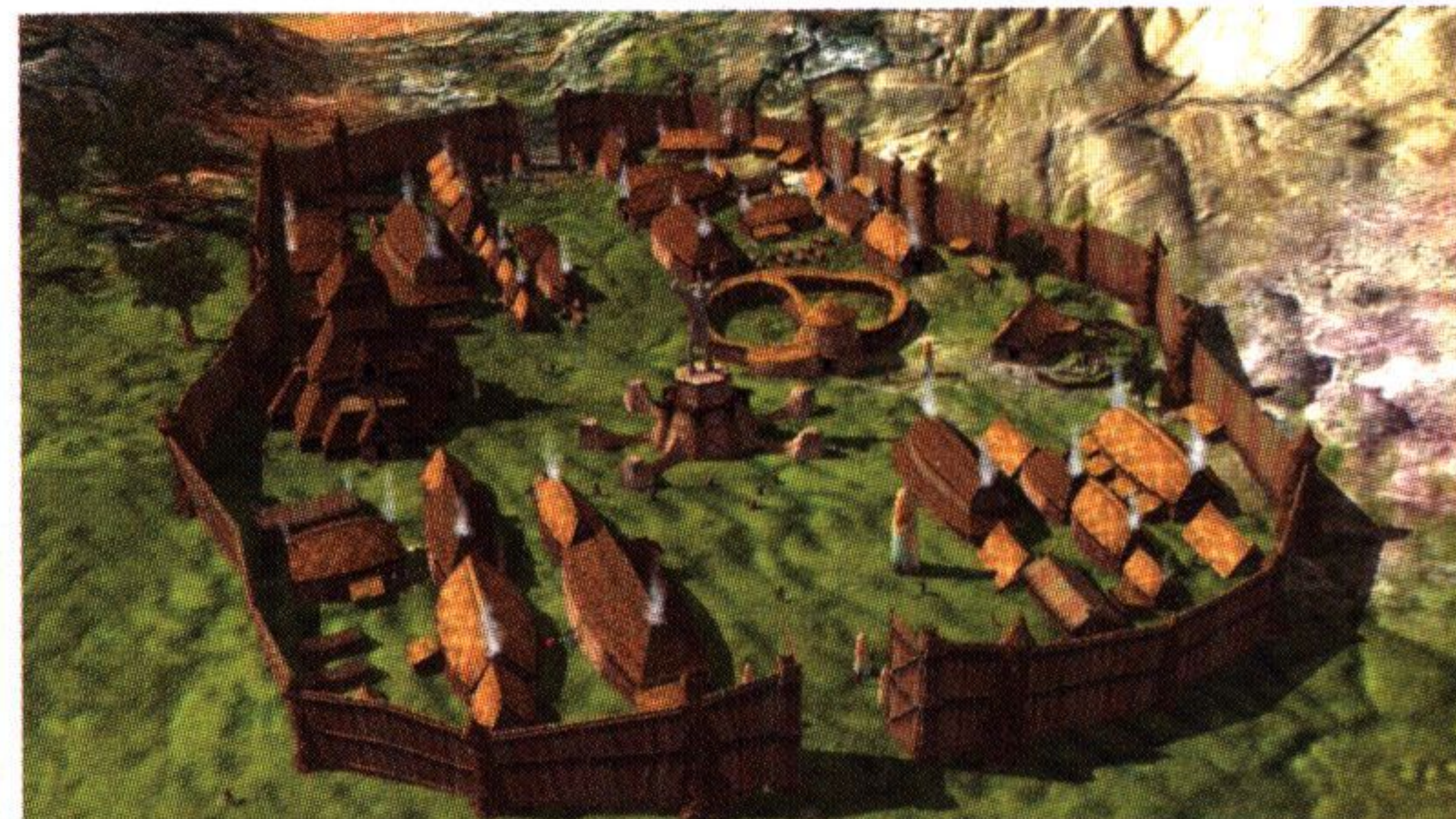
First and foremost, the game that won every single Best Of Show award in the industry, including ours: *Doom III*. We knew it was going to be there. We knew it was going to be great. But that still didn't prepare us for the incredible display of superiority put on by Carmack's new rendering engine. Few punters left the darkness of the *Doom III* box doubting that a new generation of graphics tech is upon us, and the experience certainly ruined E3 for some of the developers hawking less striking works. It even pushed *Unreal II*, formerly 'the most beautiful game ever', back into second place.

Elsewhere, the PC's online virtues were being exploited to the fullest, with a new wave of MMO games joining *Star Wars Galaxies* in the race to prove that online gaming does not imply a compromise in graphical quality.

However, my personal Best Playable Game of Show award goes to a game that looks decidedly shabby against the likes of *Doom III*: the sublime multiplayer shooter *Battlefield 1942*. Which just goes to show that spectral lighting and rag-doll physics isn't everything.

## Gods of war

There's some divine fighting going on in *Black & White 2*



By popular request, you'll spend a lot less time managing your flock and a lot more deciding whether to be good or evil.

**WE'VE KNOWN FOR** a while that Peter Molyneux's newly established Black & White Studios was working on a sequel to last year's flawed masterpiece, and it comes as no surprise that much of the drive behind *Black & White 2* is to correct the mistakes of the first game.

Realising that gamers are a violent bunch who don't want to spend hours teaching a giant orang-utan to defecate like a gentleman, *B&W 2* sees you returning to the same world only to find that all the tribes

are at war. Whether you encourage the little people to clobber each other's throats with sticks or try to establish some peace and harmony in their lives, it's clear that this is an even more ambitious piece of gaming than the original ever was.



Among your new divine abilities will be the power to build walls around villages and to arm and train your creature to both defend your people and attack other towns. Giving it a slightly more RTS feel, you will also be able to control a select number of villagers who act as commanders to whole armies (and who have been described by

Peter as working similarly to the knights in *Populous*), as well as discovering levels of technology to create more sophisticated weaponry. There will also be many more miracles to discover (peaceful as well as violent ones) and a greater division between good and evil, so it's much easier to control which path you want to go down.

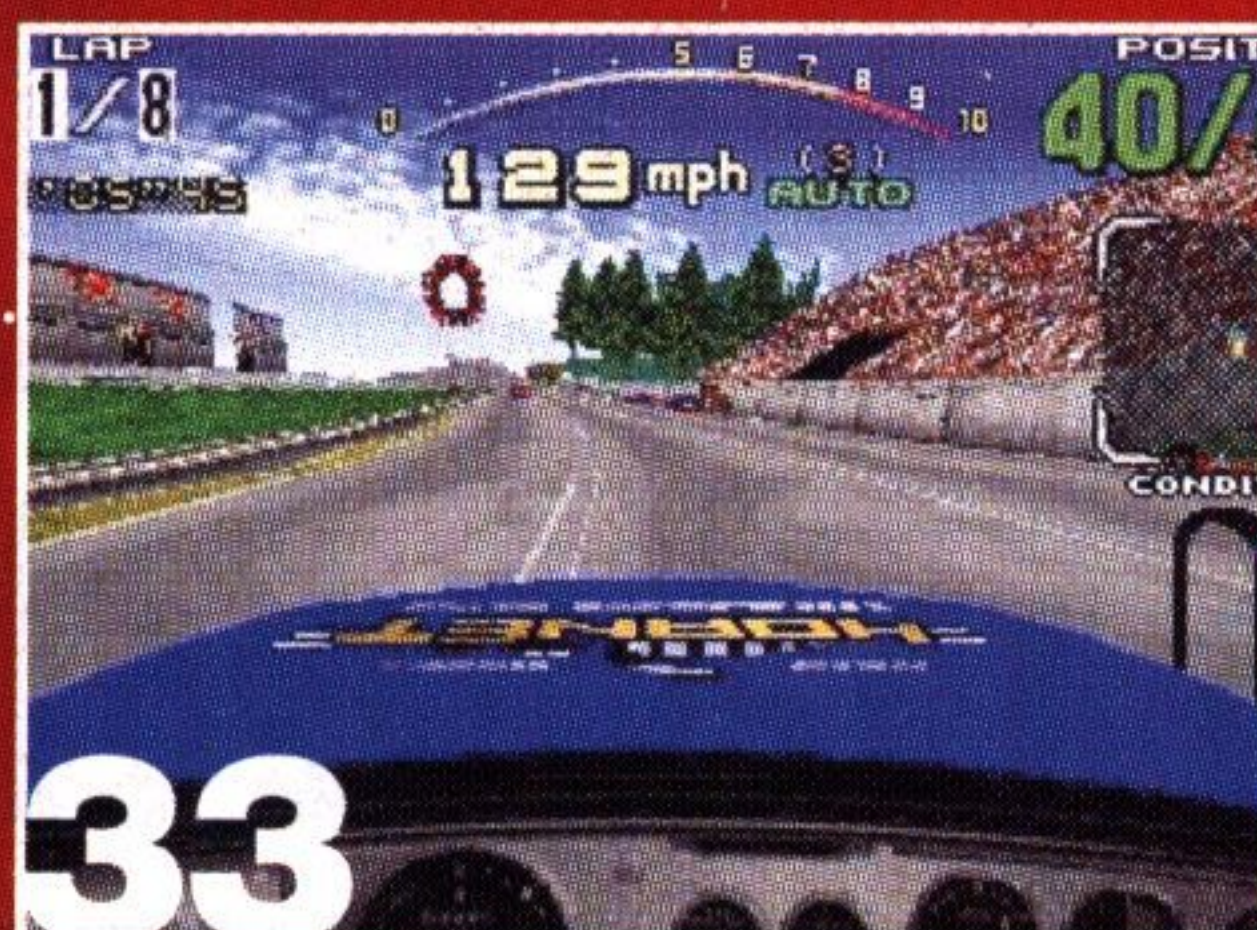
Taking a leaf out of *Warrior Kings*' book, the landscape and types of creatures that populate it will change to reflect which one you choose. As for the online part, it's being worked on separately to ensure it's a game in itself.

What's even more impressive is that *Black & White 2* is just the second in a planned series of five games, each one of which will embody a new step in the evolution of civilisation. Looks like we're witnessing the evolution of computer games too.

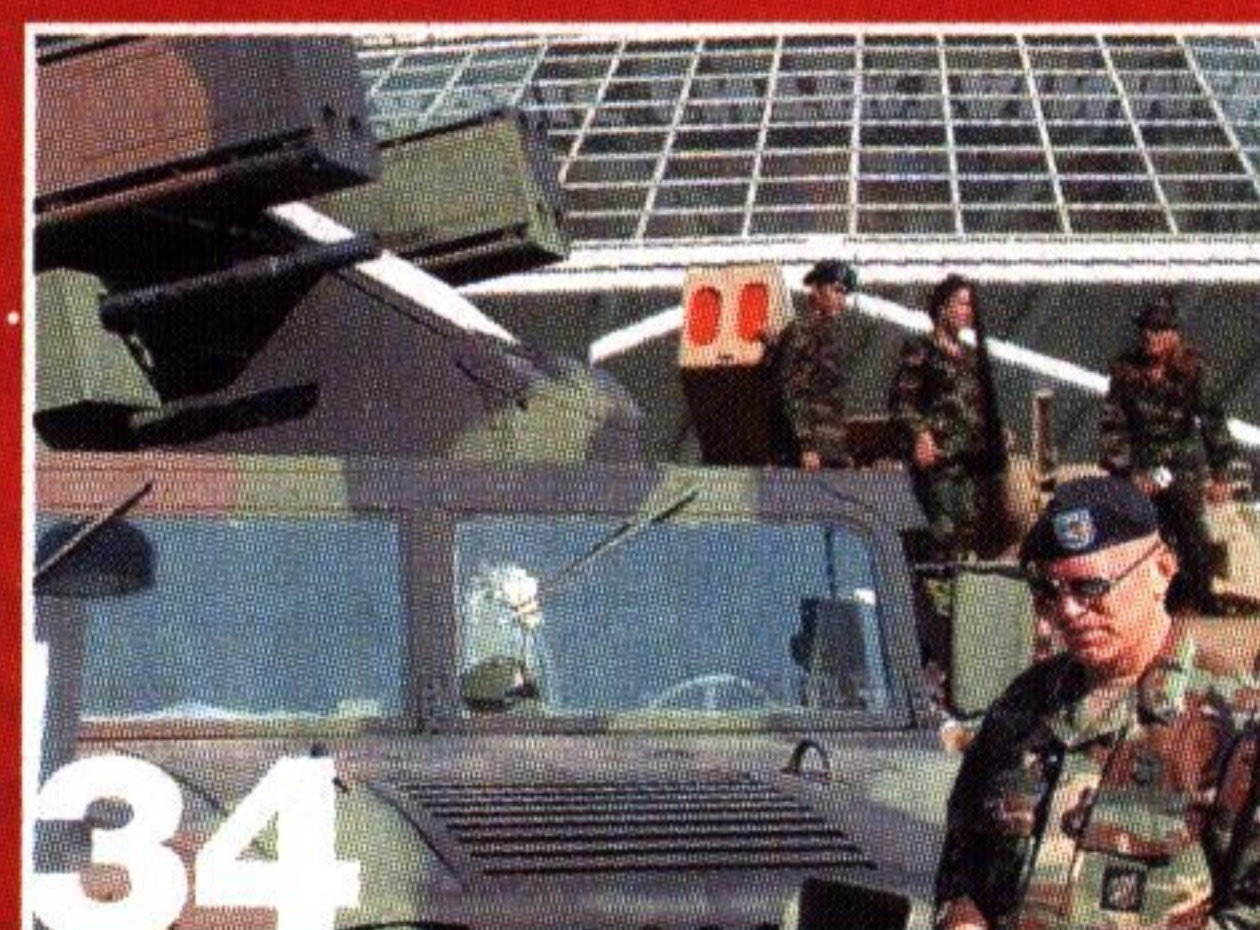
Black & White Studios • ETA TBA •  
[www.bwgame.com](http://www.bwgame.com)

War, asks Peter Molyneux, what is it good (or bad) for?

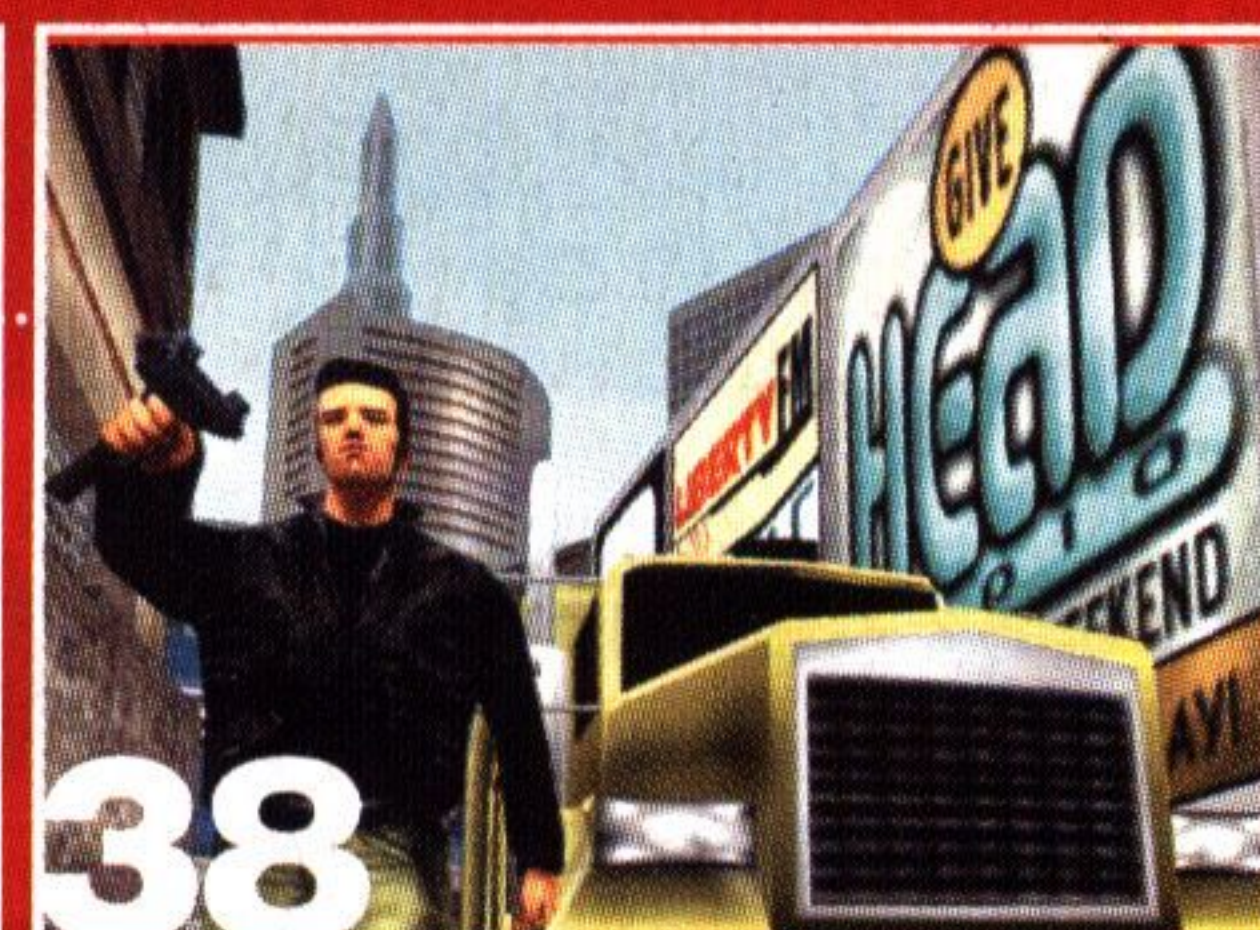




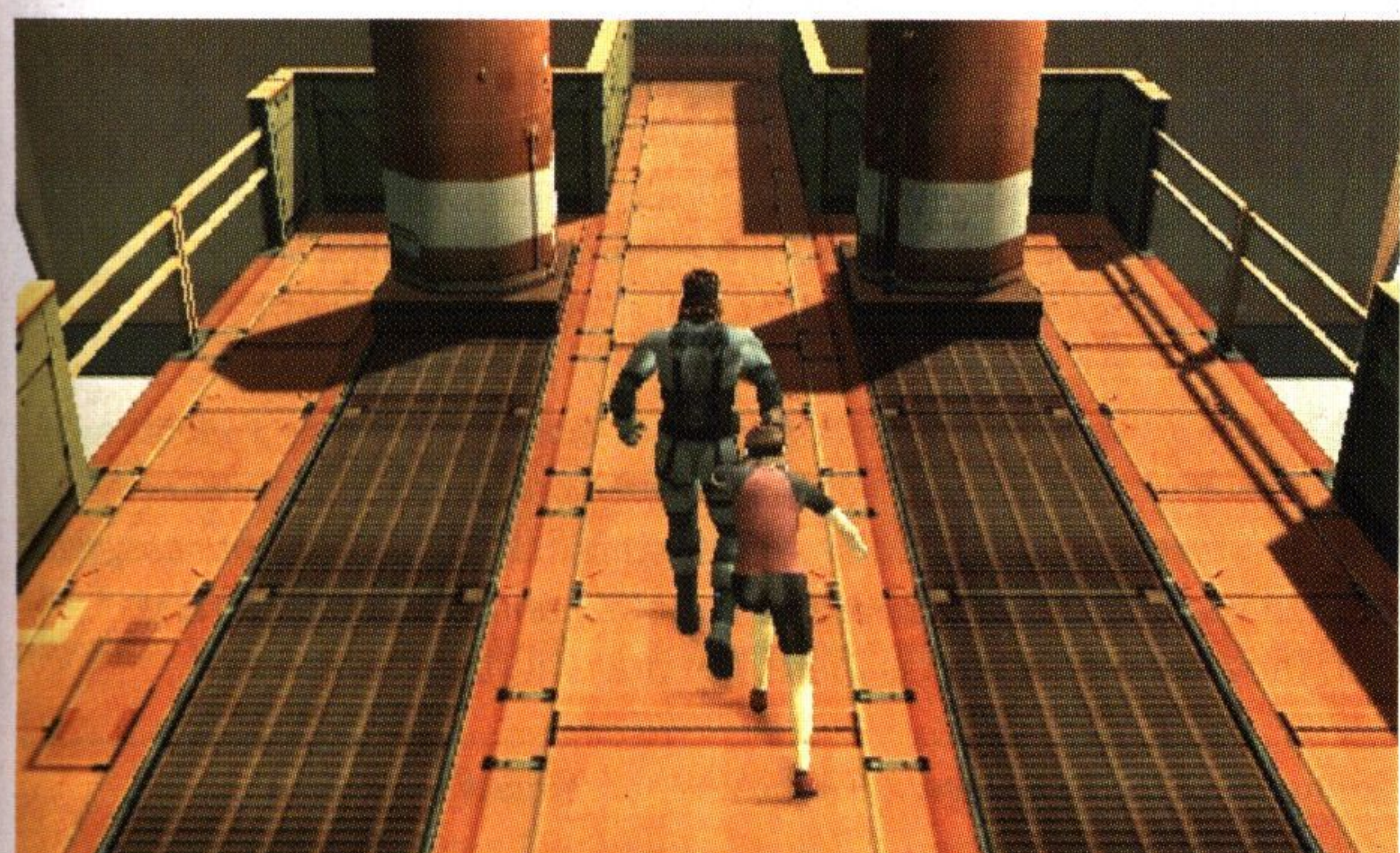
**EMULATION ZONE**  
Arcade goodness on your PC



**THE MAN WHO KNOWS**  
Recycling the industry's trash



**PCZONE CHARTS**  
Latest charts and release dates



The ability to choose characters carries a lot of significance.



Solid Snake: super-spy, ladykiller and founding member of the Bones Brigade.

# Solid Snake's revenge

Solid Snake returns to the PC with a vengeance in *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance*

**"THIS IS WHAT** *Metal Gear Solid 2* should be." These were the words of Hideo Kojima, creator and director of the *Metal Gear* series, shortly after unveiling his new project, *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance*, the PC and console follow-up to his hit stealth action game. Seen in all its glory for the first time at E3, the semi-sequel takes the PS2 hit and adds staggering amounts of new material, including the inspired addition of a *Tony Hawk's*-style skating mode. The man is clearly a genius.

In our eagerness to get this news to you last issue, we did jump to the slightly

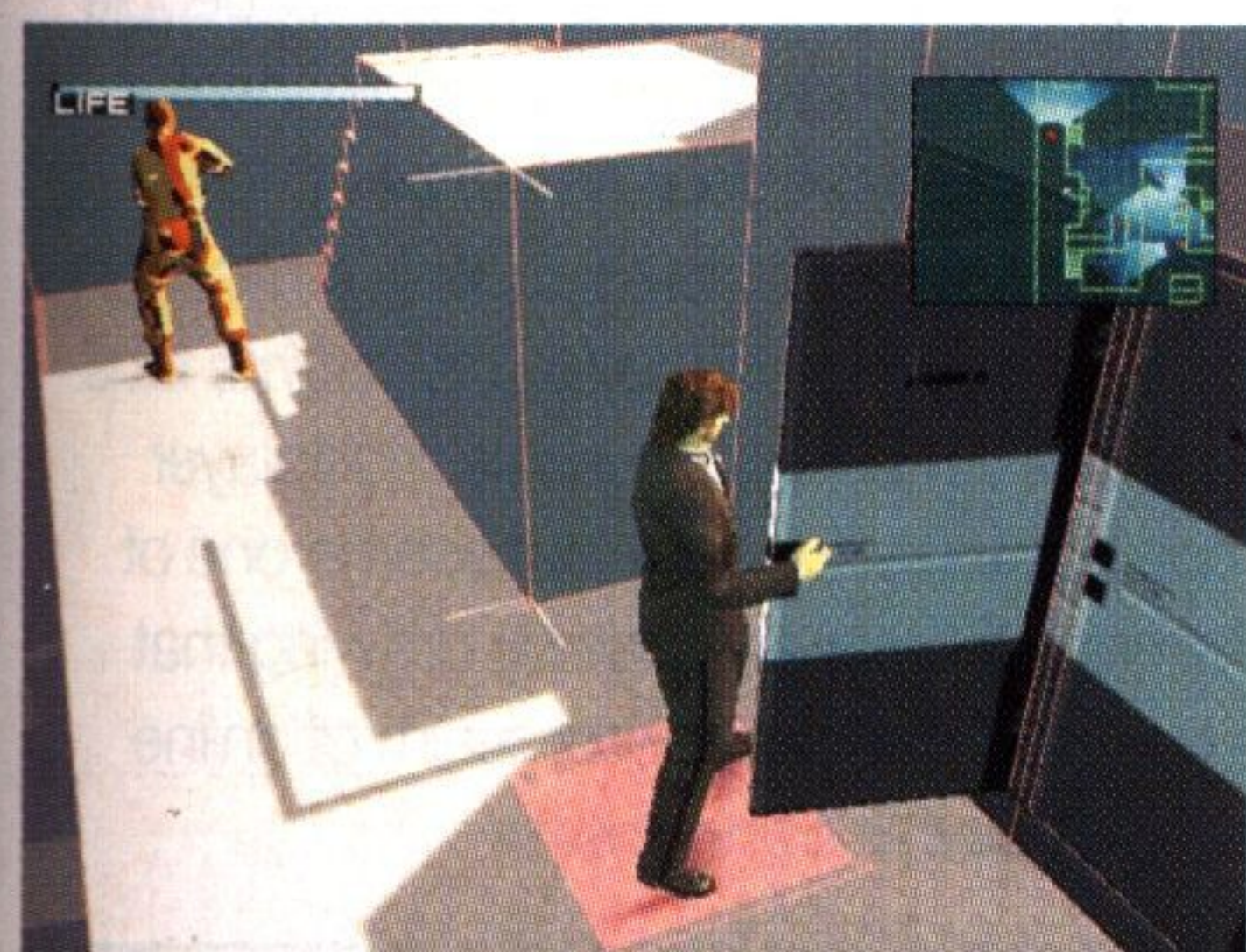
wayward conclusion that it was going to be something more than a reworked version of *MGS 2*, but as it turns out that's exactly what it is. *MGS 2: Substance* is the equivalent of *Metal Gear Solid Integral*, the improved and expanded 'director's cut' version of the original *Metal Gear Solid*.

For those of you who aren't familiar with the *Metal Gear Solid* games, what the hell have you been doing with your life? They're only the finest stealth action titles ever, and the closest games have ever come to recreating the atmosphere of a Hollywood blockbuster (or at least a slightly cooler, Japanese version thereof). Until recently it seemed that *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty* was never going to arrive on PC, hence our excitement at the announcement of a fully reworked version with a full DVD's worth of extra material. The fact that we've had to wait should also mean that the conversion is handled with due care, unlike the rather shoddy port we suffered with the previous game.

So what's all this new stuff about then? For a start there's five new episodes, to be called Snake Tales, which take Solid Snake on new missions separate from the main *Sons Of Liberty* storyline. On top of this there

are more than 200 new VR training stages, a boss survival mode and more than 100 new 'alternative missions' offering a variety of short gameplay challenges. And as mentioned Snake will be able to get radically airborne in a number of ramp-fitted level areas.

However, possibly the most significant addition is the ability to play the entire storyline with a number of different characters, including Solid Snake, Tuxedo Snake, Pliskin, the cyborg ninja and of course Raiden. While this may seem like a minor addition to some, anyone who is aware of the controversy surrounding the original game – in which everyone's favourite conflicted super-spy was ousted from the limelight by the girlish Raiden – will realise the significance of this change. Playing the entire game with Snake may not quite fit in with the intentions of the original storyline, but it's exactly what fans have been hankering for.



All-new VR stages – over 200 of 'em.



Konami • ETA Early 2003 • [www.konami-jpn.com/products/mgs2\\_sub/index.html](http://www.konami-jpn.com/products/mgs2_sub/index.html)



## SHORTS

## GTA SEQUEL



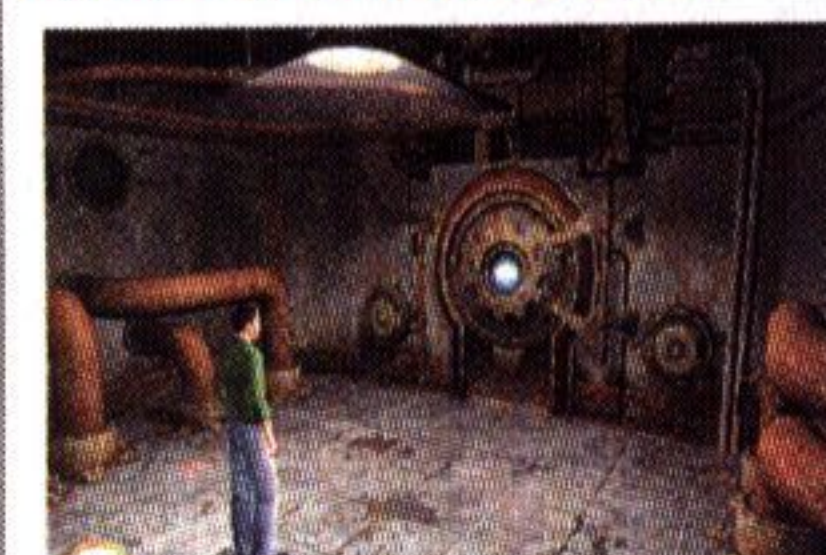
Rockstar Games has announced a stand-alone follow-up to the brilliant *Grand Theft Auto III*, called *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*. "It's an entirely new game set in the '80s, the location is Vice City, and the vibe is glamour, power and corruption." Promising to be both bigger and better than the original, *Vice City* is due late 2002.

## MORE CAMELOT



Popular MMORPG *Dark Age Of Camelot* is to get its first expansion pack, dubbed *Shrouded Isles*. Due in late 2002, the expansion will add a number of new areas to the world as well as new races, new character classes and "greatly improved graphical performance" courtesy of new engine technology.

## MASSIVELY MYST



In a surprise move, Ubi Soft and Cyan Worlds took the opportunity of E3 to announce *Myst Online*, "a persistent online world-based adventure" – with real-time 3D graphics no less. Uniquely for a massively multiplayer game, gameplay will be based purely around exploration, puzzle solving and communication, and Cyan ambitiously aims to add new material to the world every day. It's planned for launch in 2003, and has a site at [www.mystonline.com](http://www.mystonline.com).

## DEUS EX MOVIE



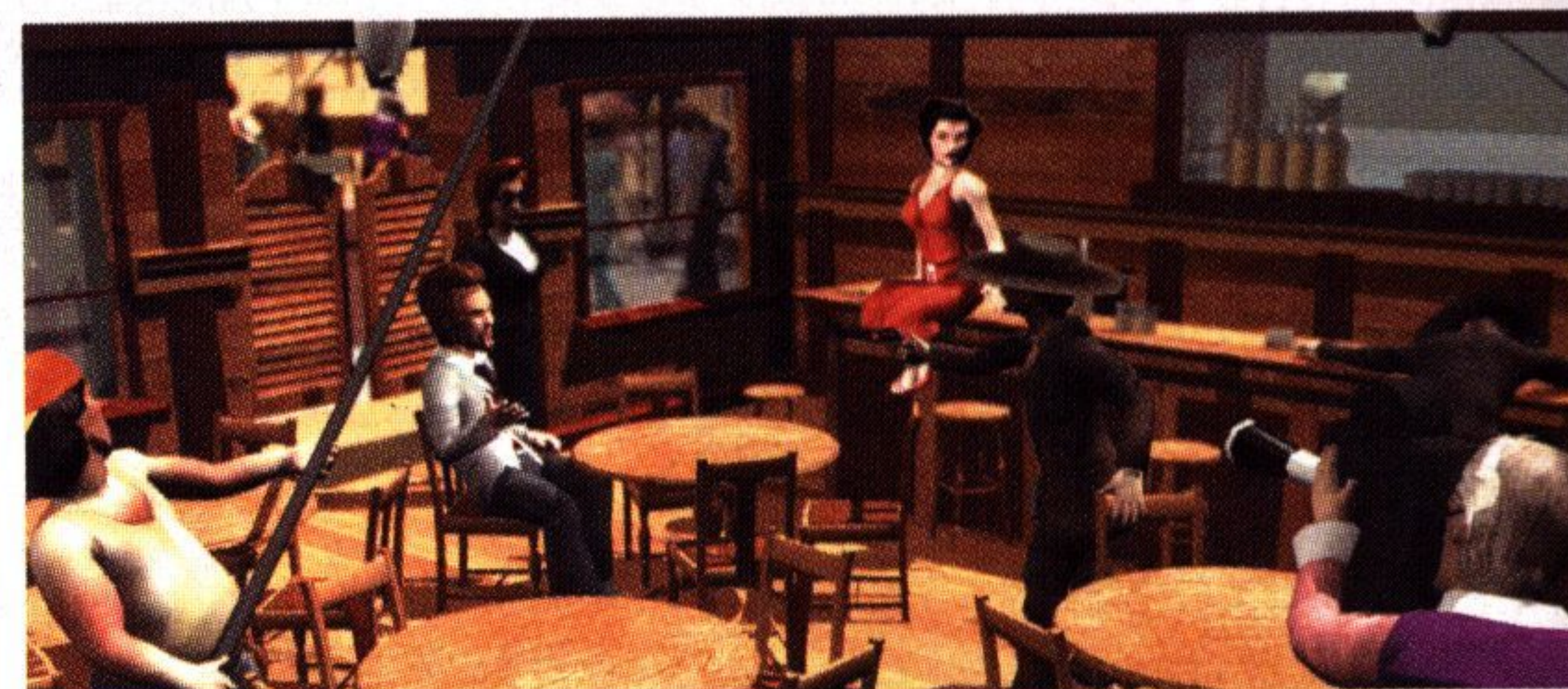
The exploits of JC Denton are to be translated into a big-budget sci-fi action film by Columbia Pictures, it was confirmed recently. No potential cast members have been mentioned for the *Deus Ex* film, but the producer of *Spider-Man* is on board and there's a script already in production. *PC ZONE* is standing by to eat its collective hat if the film is actually any good.

# Cinema paradiso

Lionhead offer you the director's chair in *The Movies*



The brilliance of Lionhead will ensure this is no ordinary management sim.



How you push the boundaries of taste is up to you.

**WE'VE BEEN ABLE** to manage airports, theme parks, hotels and even pop bands, and now *Black & White* creator Peter Molyneux has dreamed up the idea of letting you run your own film studio.

At the hands of anybody else the concept would probably turn into yet another tedious Tycoon kind of game. But thankfully this is Lionhead we're talking about – a developer that clearly has the vision and talent to pull it off.

*The Movies* will allow you to manage a film studio from the 1920s through to the modern age, from silent films to Technicolor and CGI. You can construct sets, hire actors (who will have as strong personalities as the real ones), manage the crew and ensure it all comes in under budget. Most intriguing though, is the aspect of the game where you actually have to develop your own script and put it

into moving pictures through a selection of slider bars controlling things like violence, romance and realism. So ultimately, your success will depend on your own skill as a film-maker, although how you balance the business side and all the problems (such as scandals, on-set romances and difficult stars) that face real-world studios will be just as important.

If it proves successful enough, who knows, we might get a sequel where you can emulate Molyneux himself and run your own games studio. Then you could use the game to create a game where players can run their own game developing house and emulate you, and then they could... no, stop there, my brain hurts.

Lionhead • ETA TBA • [www.themoviesgame.com](http://www.themoviesgame.com)

# Worldwide Sims

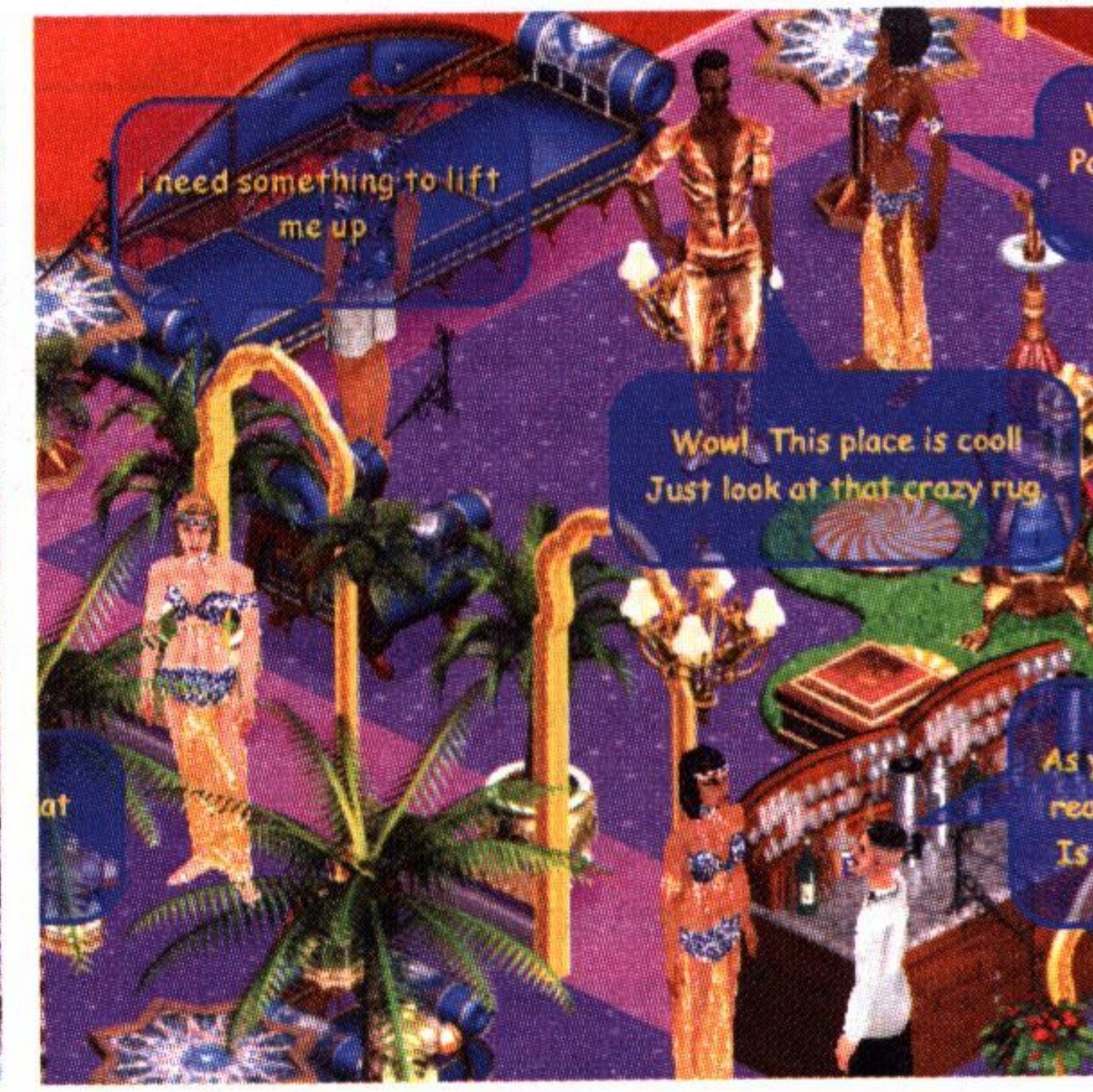
The biggest PC franchise ever is taken to its logical conclusion in *The Sims Online*



A sci-fi themed house is sure to pull in the punters.



It's the most elaborate doll set ever conceived.



**WE MIGHT LIKE** putting the boot in every time another *Sims* expansion pack lands on our desk, but there's no denying that Will Wright's baby has become a true phenomenon. And while we've often criticised the add-on packs for not really providing anything new, Maxis is finally giving the series a human dimension with *The Sims Online*, allowing people the world over to eat pizza together and gargle nonsense at each other without ever leaving their bedrooms.

It might turn into just another massively multiplayer chat room, but it will be an incredibly sophisticated one. You'll be able to house your Sim in one of around 20 cities, and then it's a lifetime of eating, sleeping, going to work and, most importantly, forming relationships with other Sims. Bucking a long tradition of death and depravity in

online games, your success will be gauged by the number of people who come round to your house and how well you entertain them, although you can also set certain rooms in your house as off-limits.

Two things could happen with this: it could enjoy only a moderate success compared to the single-player hit because most *Sims* fans are casual gamers likely to be scared off by the whole multiplayer thing and lacking fast Net connections. Or it could become one of the most important multiplayer games ever made by drawing that massive fanbase of casual gamers into the sinister realm of online gaming. We can only wait and see which one it is.

Maxis • ETA End of 2002 • [thesims.ea.com](http://thesims.ea.com)



# Total devastation

A high-tech FPS from a no-name developer causes ripples at E3



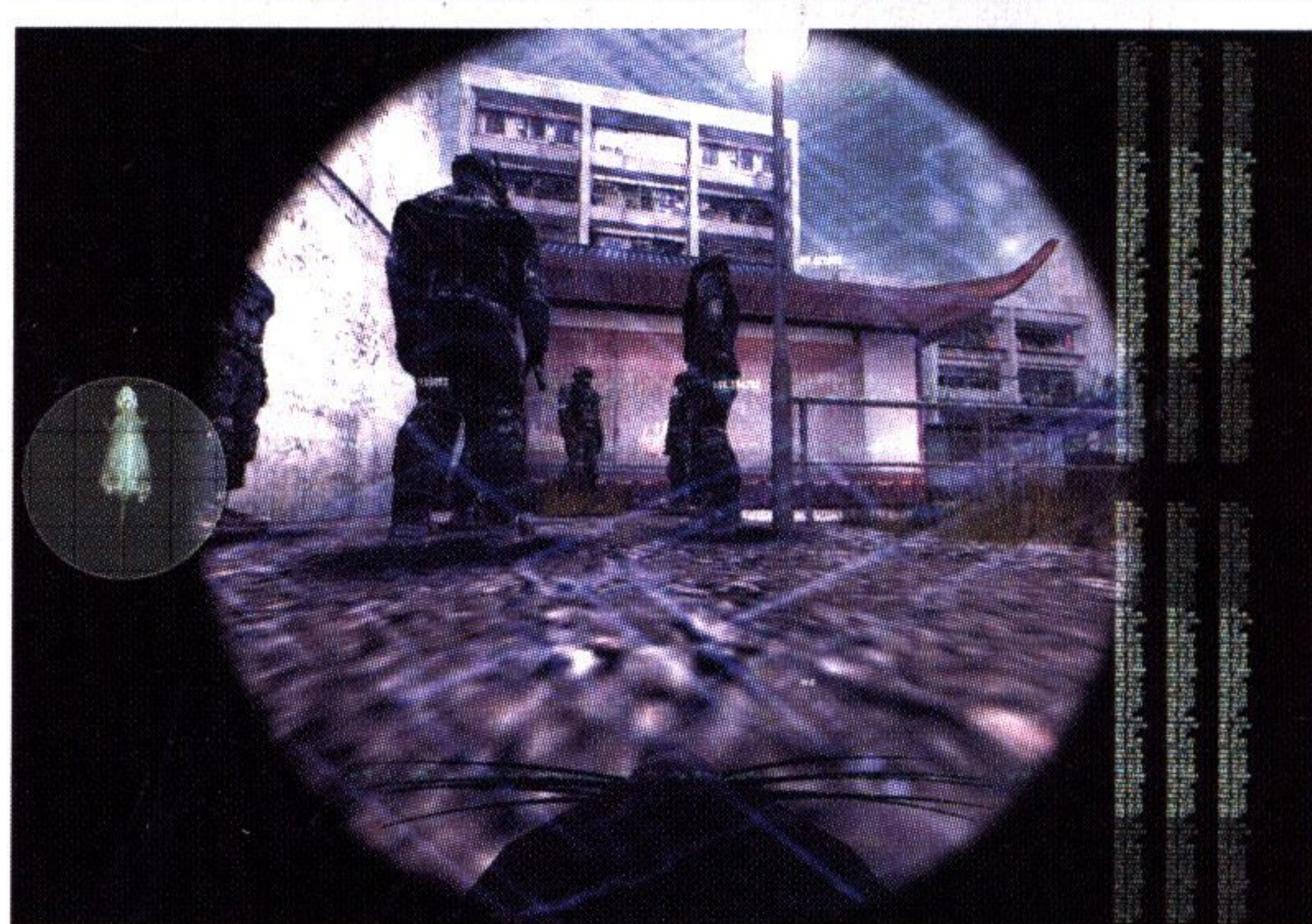
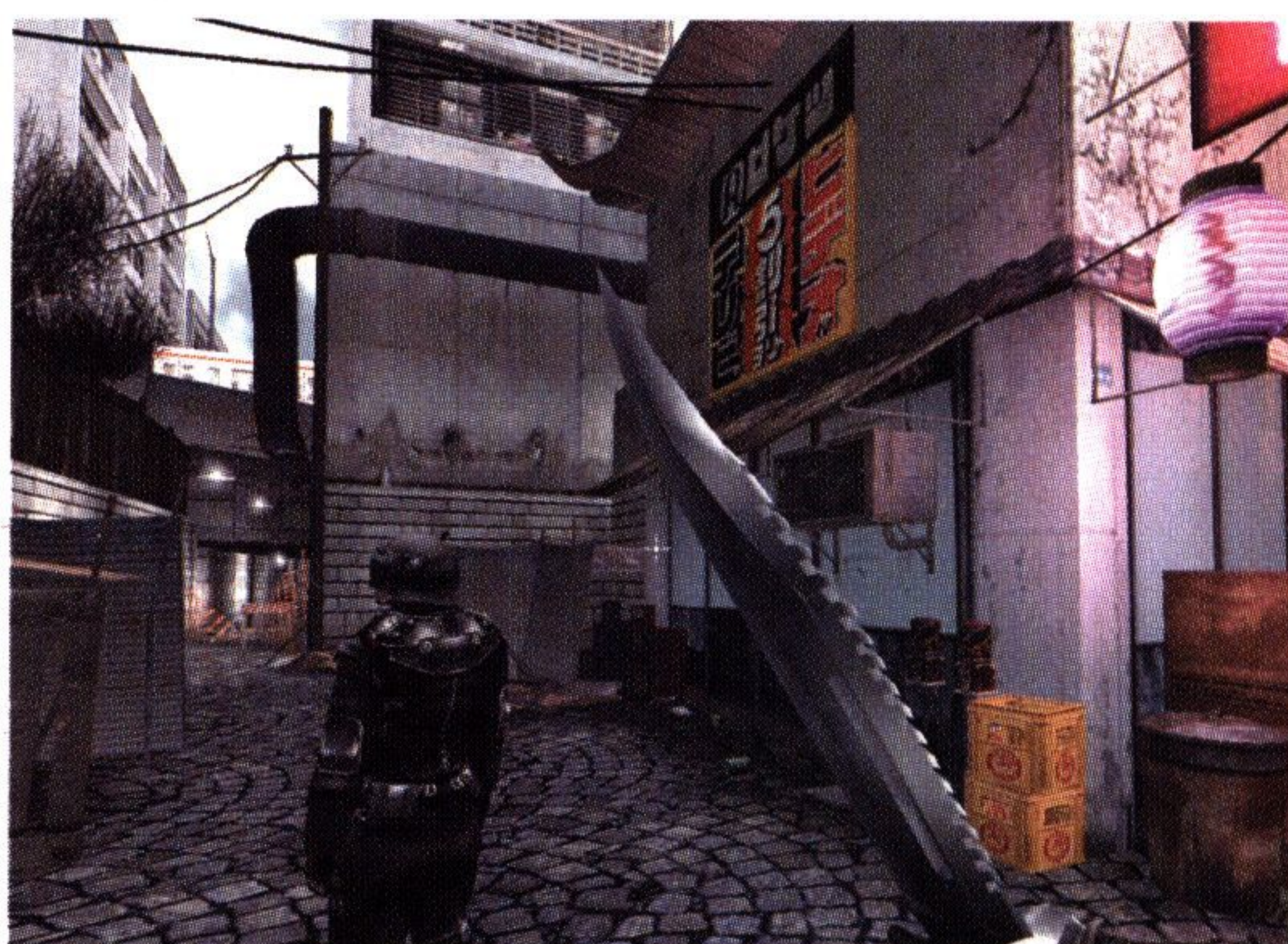
The level of gore is set to rival *Soldier Of Fortune*. And with the real-world physics, you can even kick the severed heads around afterwards.

**ANOTHER HIDDEN GEM** from E3 that didn't quite make it into our Dark Horses of E3 feature (page 24) was glorious team-oriented FPS *Devastation*. The game is an absolute technical wonder with a feature set to rival *Doom III*, despite the fact that it comes from relatively unknown developer Digitalo (they did the *Harry Potter* PC game and that's pretty much it to date).

Built on heavily adapted Unreal technology, *Devastation* boasts just about every next-gen technical trick you can name, including real-world physics, rag-dolls, fully interactive world items and accurately modelled dynamic sound. While such features are soon to become standard, the developers are doing their best to maximise the gameplay possibilities of the new tech. Pick up some random crap and toss it to create a diversion, smash a discarded bottle and use it to forever ruin your opponent's chances with the ladies.

The AI system is also hugely advanced. Both enemies and team-mates have been endowed with unusually high awareness of their surroundings, as well as specific 'micro-behaviours' that allow them to react in a more unpredictable and human fashion (though sadly this wasn't working when we saw the game).

This high level of technical sophistication is more than matched by the game's visuals, which are a cut above most of the other Unreal-powered shooters we've seen lately. The gritty post-apocalyptic art direction is hardly ground-breaking, but the game rises above the competition with its loving attention to detail and some excellent texture work. "The graphics in *Devastation* are



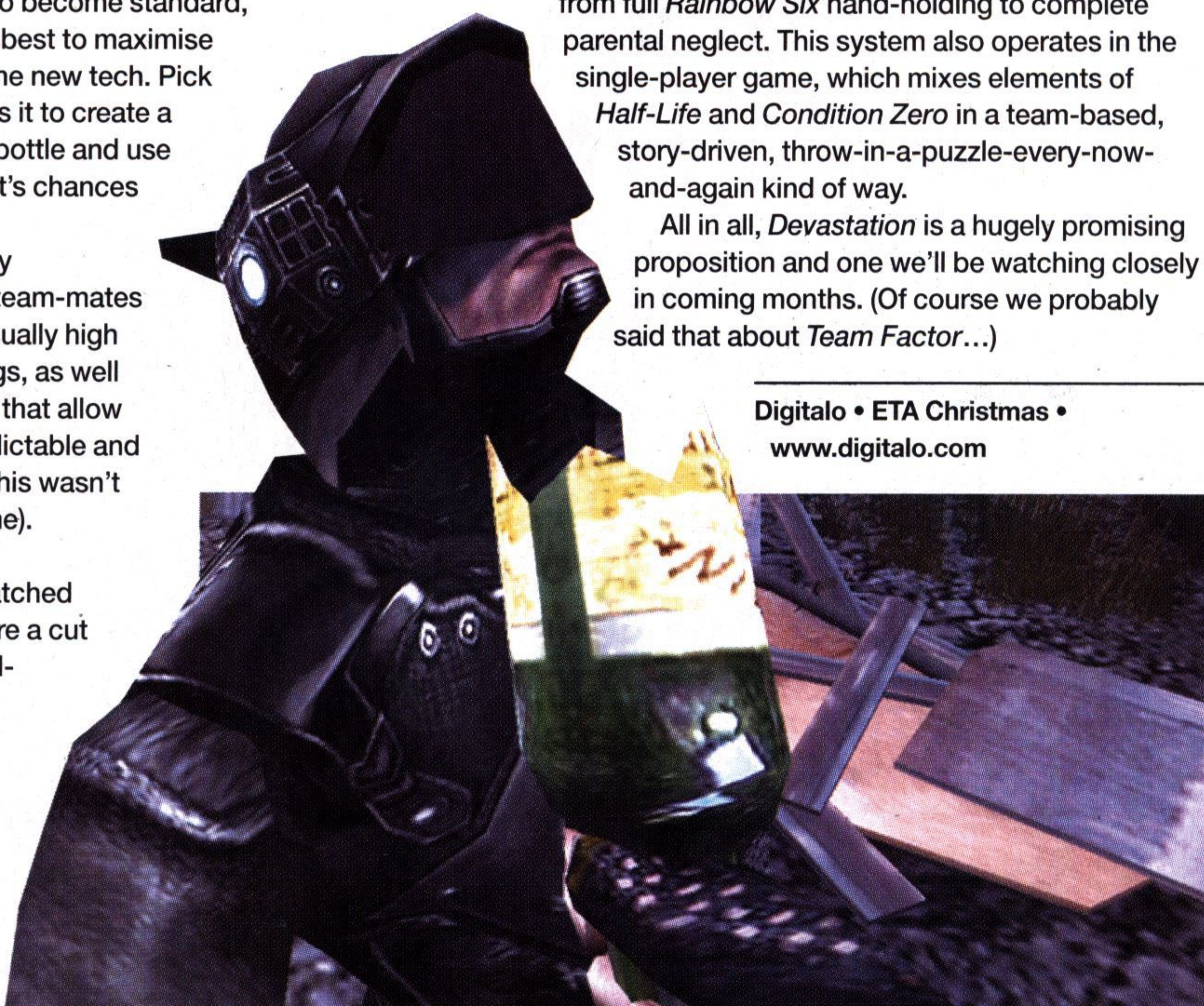
The 30-odd weapons include the brilliant rat-drone, used for spying on opponents or as a remote bomb.

so in-your-face that you'll think you're in the latest Hollywood thriller," enthuses Vic DeLeon, senior producer of Digitalo. "The environments and gameplay will suck you right in."

At this stage the focus is being put on the game's multiplayer side, which aims to offer a 'fresh' multiplayer experience with its new team-based modes. It's basically street gangs vs corrupt future cops in a battle for domination of a devastated world, with a mixture of tactical strategy and all-out carnage. The most innovative feature seems to be the team orders system for controlling bots, which allows you to determine the amount of autonomy they are permitted, from full *Rainbow Six* hand-holding to complete parental neglect. This system also operates in the single-player game, which mixes elements of *Half-Life* and *Condition Zero* in a team-based, story-driven, throw-in-a-puzzle-every-now-and-again kind of way.

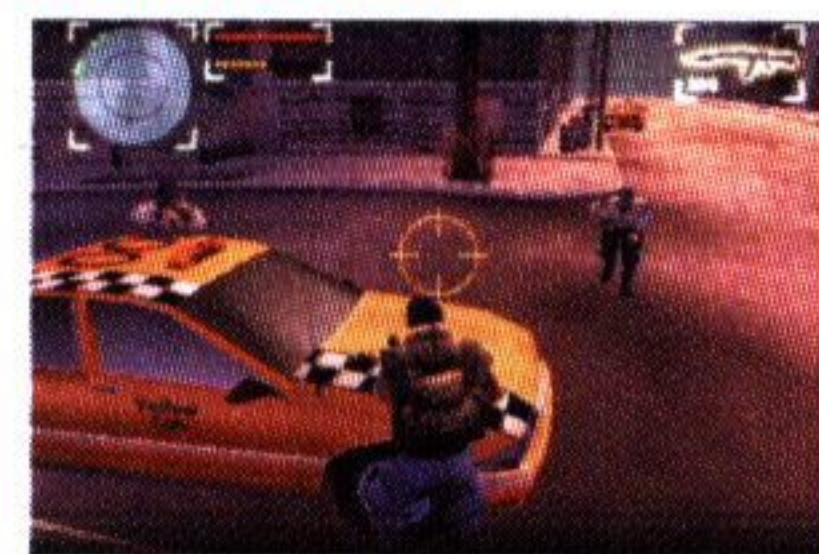
All in all, *Devastation* is a hugely promising proposition and one we'll be watching closely in coming months. (Of course we probably said that about *Team Factor*...)

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www.digitalo.com



## SHORTS

### RED DAWN



*Hitman* developer Io Interactive has a new first-person action game in development called *Freedom: The Battle For Liberty Island*. Mixing strategic turn-based stages with first-person urban action, the game is set in an alternate reality in which the Soviet Union has won the Cold War and invaded a weakened USA, and is due for release around the end of the year.

### LORDING IT UP



Nival Interactive's excellent turn-based strategy game *Etherlords* took us quite by surprise earlier this year, so we're happy to report that they're back with an all-new sequel. *Etherlords II* will follow in a similar vein to the original game, while putting much more emphasis on narrative and multiplayer elements. No release date has been set as yet, but we'll keep you informed.

### CUTTHROAT ISLAND



A sequel to the banana republic management game *Tropico* is in the works at San Francisco-based developer Frog City (*Trade Empires*). Instead of playing a Castro-style dictator as in the first game, *Tropico 2: Pirate Cove* will put you in the role of a 17th-century pirate king, managing a secret hideaway and a gang of bloodthirsty buccaneers.

### KITT RACER



The Germans are going to go absolutely crazy when they get wind of this. The classic '80s David Hasselhoff TV series *Knight Rider* is about to become a game courtesy of B-grade racing specialists Davilex Games (*US Racer*, *Thames Racer*, etc). Planned for a Q4 release, the game will contain a mixture of racing and action-adventure elements.



## SHORTS

## MATRIX ONLINE...



Your prayers have been answered. Monolith is to use its new LithTech tools to create an MMORPG based on the *Matrix* films, it was revealed recently. The *Aliens vs Predator 2* developer will work under the direction of Warner Bros and in conjunction with the Wachovski brothers to recreate the virtual world depicted in the films. It makes so much sense we can't believe we didn't see it coming...

## ...AND OFFLINE

In further *Matrix* news, *Messiah* developer Shiny has finally come clean on its long-awaited 3D action game based on the Keanu Reeves classic, perhaps spurred on by the recent acquisition of the company by French publishing giant Infogrames. The game is to be called *Enter The Matrix*, and will be released in May 2003 to coincide with the release of the next *Matrix* film, *The Matrix Reloaded*.

# To kingdom come

Since when did Korean strategy games look this good?

**MORE THAN ONE** of the games at this year's E3 provoked confused looks from punters, confronted as they were with 'in-game' footage so stunning that even two years ago it would have been preposterous. With its chaotic battle scenes and remarkable level of detail, forthcoming fantasy RTS *Kingdom Under Fire: The Crusaders* was one such game.

Of course developers have been known to cheat us before, but we're assured that the demo footage of *The Crusaders* was fully legit. It's even more surprising if you remember the original *Kingdom Under Fire*, which though not a bad little RTS, did look decidedly dull.

With a stunning new 3D engine in place, *The Crusaders* aims to recreate war scenes on the scale of *Gladiator* and *Lord Of The Rings*, with up to 450 high-poly units on one battlefield.

While the experience system of the first game has been deepened and new hero characters introduced, the main

changes to gameplay come courtesy of the new engine. Real-time day/night cycles mean that prolonged battles will be cast into darkness, with a massive shift in battle conditions; bright sunlight dazzles soldiers and impairs their fighting ability; weather effects such as rain and wind affect ballistics and troop morale. One scenario described to us even allows you to destroy a dam in order to cause a flood among enemy troops.

Combine this immense strategic intricacy with the astounding level of detail evident both in units and the environment and this game could pose a serious threat to the likes of *Medieval: Total War*.

Phantagram • ETA Q1 2003 •

[www.phantagraminteractive.com](http://www.phantagraminteractive.com)



These images give much hope for *Total Annihilation II*, Phantagram's other RTS.

## AGE OF WONDERS II™

### THE WIZARD'S THRONE

"Spits with precise aim into the bleary eye of the less ambitious *Might and Magic* series"  
- PC Format

[www.ageofwonders.co.uk](http://www.ageofwonders.co.uk)



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# EMULATION ZONE

**Stuart Campbell reports from a world where no platform is out of reach**

## ALL IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE

**VIEWERS, IT ISN'T** often Emulation Zone finds itself treading ground last walked by J Robert Oppenheimer and the scientists of Project Manhattan (the WW2 operation behind the first atomic bomb), but such ground we tread this month. Oppenheimer, when questioned some time after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki about the moral implications of

his work, famously and rather regretfully observed that the sheer scientific magic of what they were doing completely blinded the scientists to its practical applications. And similarly, a lot of the time, emulation is something that comes about purely because a coder wanted to see if they could do something, rather than having a practical purpose in mind. The classic example was the release of the N64 emulator UltraHLE a few years ago, a technical achievement so stunning that it didn't even occur to the author that people would want to – God forbid – use the emulator to play N64 games, and it was with some surprise that he withdrew the emulator immediately after release when the entirely predictable storm blew up around it. But anyway.

Into this same category we have to enter the emulation of most CD-based systems, such as the CD32 and Mega CD – which we've covered here in the last couple of months – and now the Sega Saturn. To enjoy the games made playable by Fabian Autrel's fast-developing emulator Satourne (downloadable from the link below), you obviously have to own the original CDs, and these days Saturn hardware is actually a lot cheaper to buy than the games are, which seems to render the emu slightly pointless. Except, of course, that all the best Saturn games were only ever released in Japan, and to get yourself an imported or chipped Saturn to play them on nowadays, you will have to pay through the nose to some rip-off retro shop or profiteering git on eBay. So in fact, there is a point to Saturn emulation, and by extension this column, after all. Phew, that was close.

### LINKS

[www.satourne.consolection.com](http://www.satourne.consolection.com) – Satourne homepage

### GOT MILK?

PC ZONE's autocratic News Ed doesn't like it when Emulation Zone mentions fruit machine emulators "because they're not proper games," so we'd better make this quick and hope he doesn't notice. A brand-new emulator, JPEMU, was recently released, offering emulation of another arcade hardware system, JPM's Impact. Why should you care? Because Impact was the hardware protocol that ran the excellent *Sonic The Hedgehog* fruity (as well as classics such as *Roller Coaster*, *Indiana Jones* and *Monopoly*). And Sonic is a proper videogame star, so we'll sneak it in. Quick, before he notices.

### LINKS

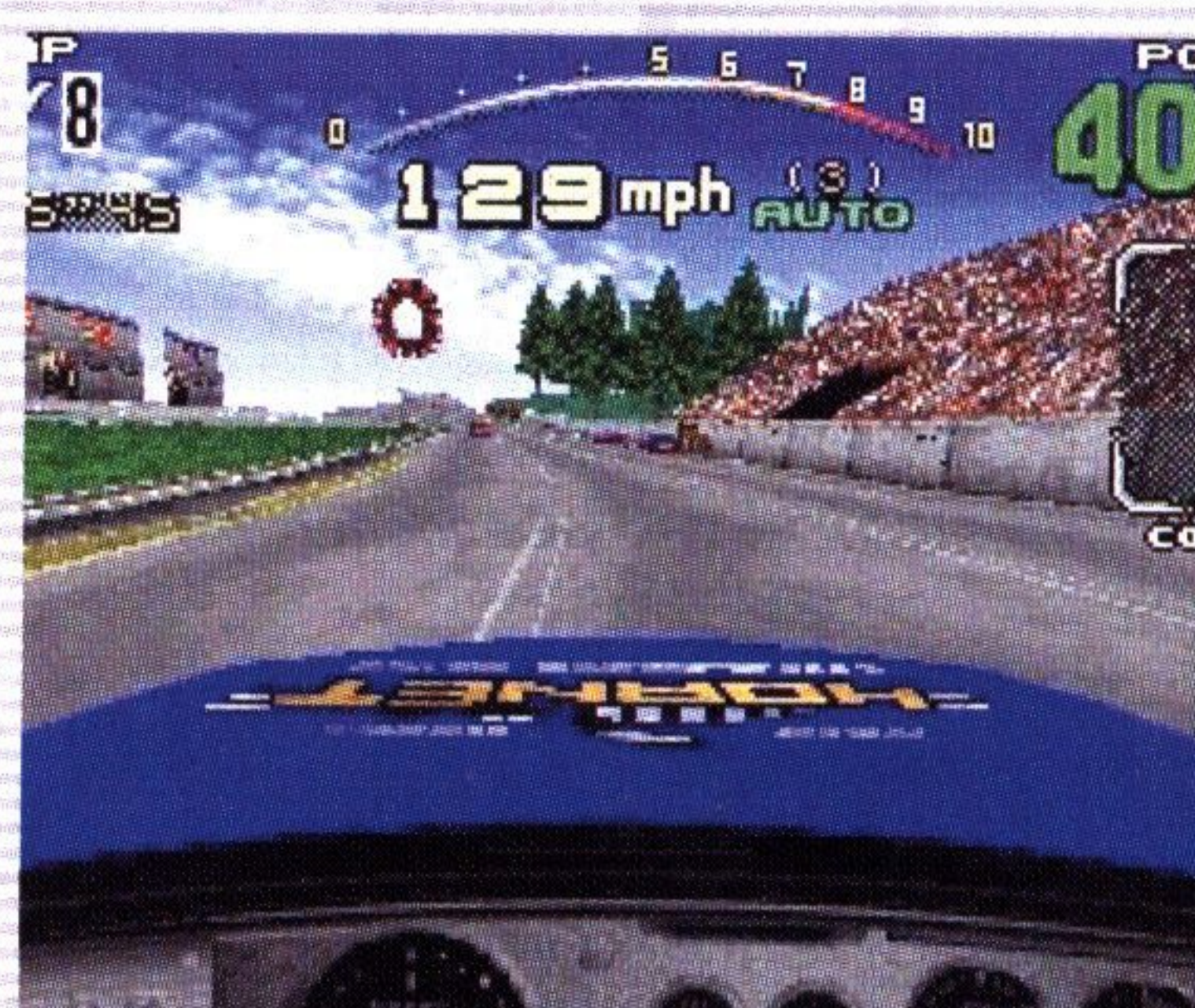
[www.jpemu.com](http://www.jpemu.com) – JPEMU homepage



What would a hedgehog do with a tenner anyway?



The legendary *Radiant Silvergun*, for many the best 2D shooter ever.



If only your modern-day PC could fix *Daytona USA's* pop-up scenery.



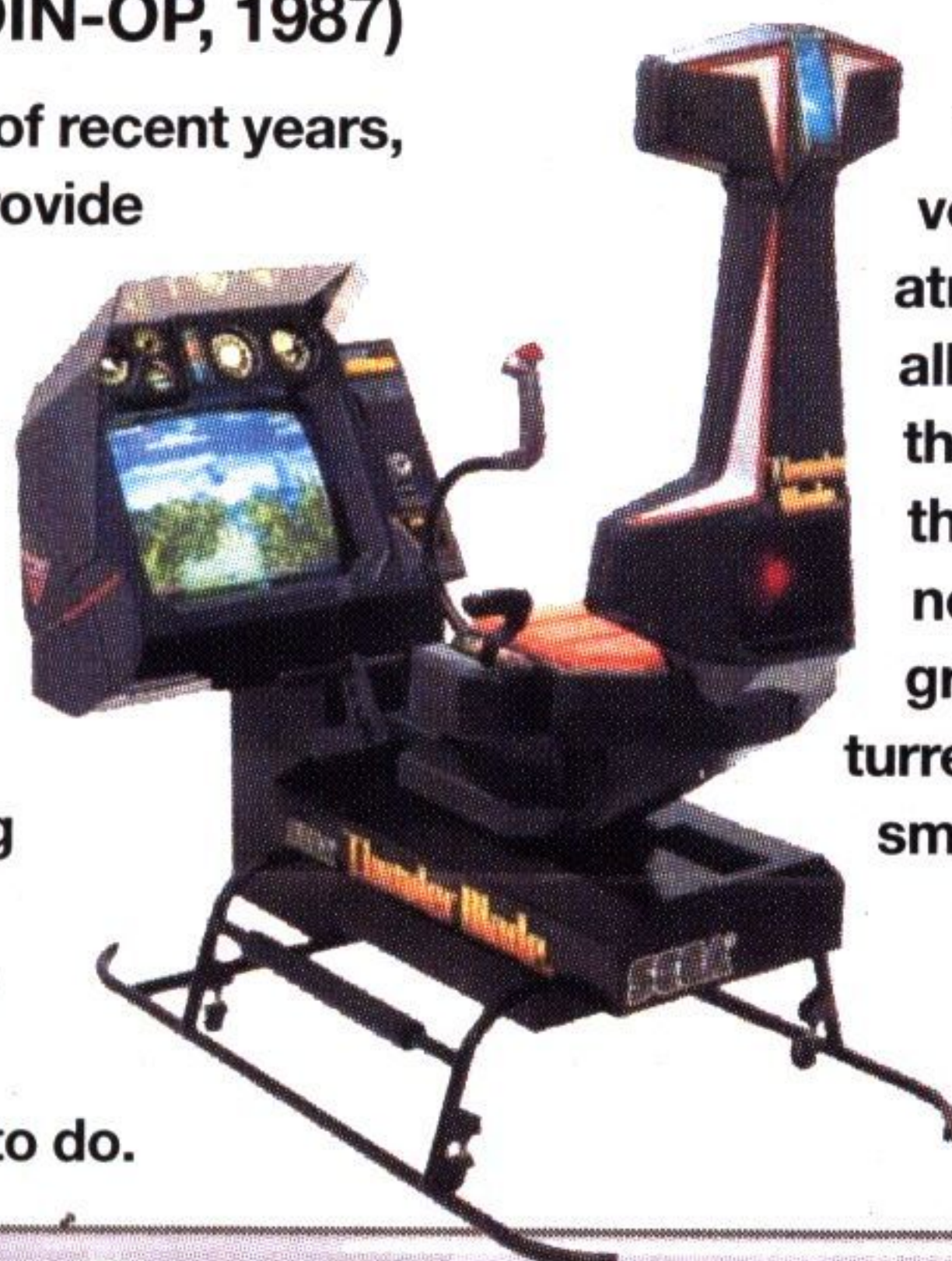
A beat 'em up with a difference – you're on dragons.

**"All the best Sega Saturn games were only ever released in Japan"**

## EMULATION OF THE MONTH

### ▲ THUNDER BLADE (SEGA, COIN-OP, 1987)

One of the most famous emulators of recent years, Final Burn, was initially written to provide emulation of a bunch of Sega's classic mid-'80s 3D coin-ops (*After Burner*, *Power Drift*, *Galaxy Force* etc), but quickly found itself sidetracked into becoming the first emu to crack Capcom's CPS2 encryption and play host to a never-ending stream of 2D fighting games. Now, however, after a lengthy hiatus, FB has gone back to its roots with a new version, which finally does the job the emu set out to do.



The prime beneficiary of the new version is *Thunder Blade*, the highly atmospheric helicopter assault sim that's all the better for not having to be played in the ludicrous manually swivelling cockpit that beset the arcade game. There's still nothing quite like hovering six feet off the ground and sending rockets right up the turrets of enemy tanks through a cloud of smoke and flame. In real life, too.

### LINKS

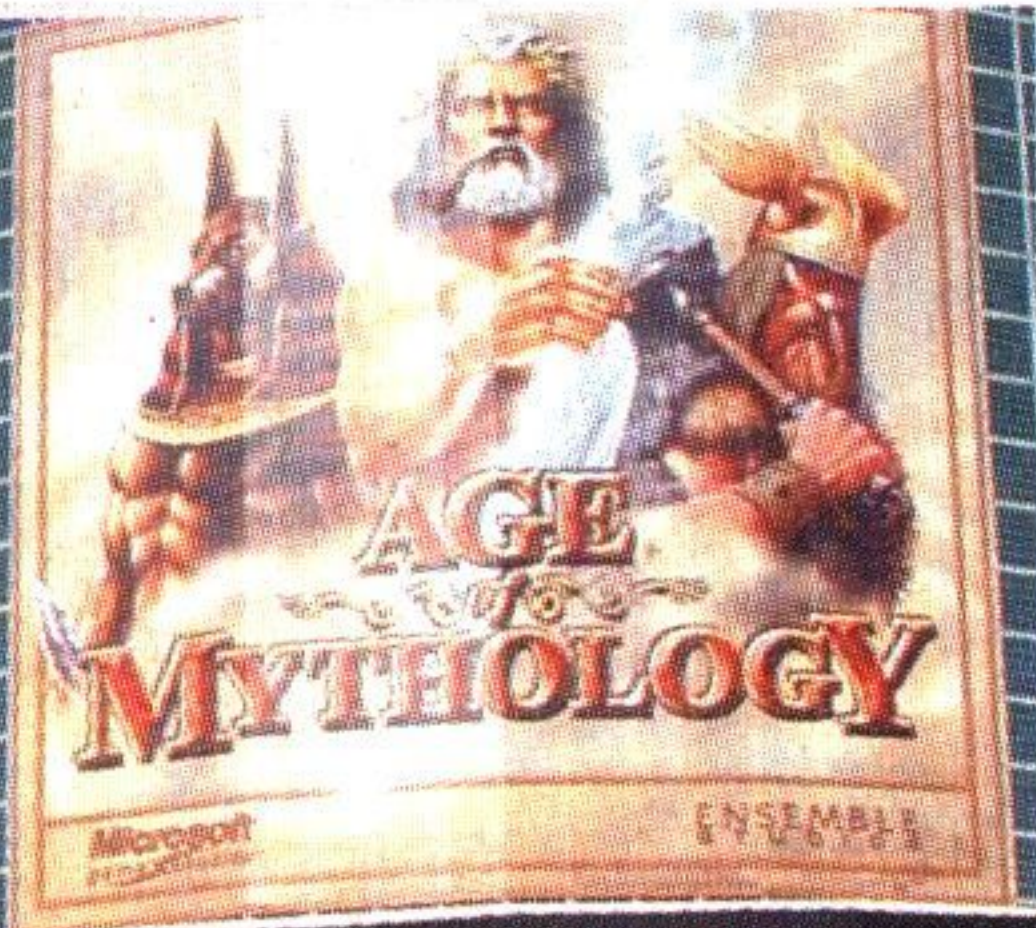
[www.finalburn.com](http://www.finalburn.com) – Final Burn



Helicopter antics in the age of *Airwolf*.



# THE MAN WHO KNOWS



**THE UNITED STATES ARMY** has been slammed for hijacking **E3** in a thinly veiled attempt to recruit gamers into a life of pain and death. Barricading the entrance to the **Los Angeles** convention centre with a vulgar display of military might, army personnel bombarded attendees of the trade show with a mass of propaganda, attempting to lure them into two strategically placed vehicles in order to transmit moving images into their brains. As part of its insidious campaign, the military has developed a game, **America's Army**, which will be cover-mounted on a specialist magazine and freely available to innocent gamers via 'the Internet'. It will comprise two sections; **Soldiers**, a role-playing game that deals with the day-to-day life of a trained killer, and **Operations**, a squad-based shooter. Wearing thick sunglasses – presumably to protect his identity – and with his badge mysteriously flipped, obscuring his name, an unknown soldier exclusively revealed: "The bottom line is to give the public out there a basic idea of what we do in the army, day in day out. This is not a recruiting tool or anything like that. It's just a good public relations thing for the United States Army." The interview reached a rapid conclusion in response to a question about replicating friendly fire.

**Winchester Crown Court** has heard how a jealous wife stabbed her sleeping husband after he confessed to an online affair with a woman he had met while playing **Delta Force**. The **Ministry of Defence** worker, identified only as **Mr Barrow**, 35, struck up a relationship with an American player known as the **Ice Lady**. Days before the attack, Barrow told his Thai-born wife that he was planning to travel to the States to bring back the Ice Lady as he feared for her safety after her husband found out about the affair. On the night of the attack, Barrow awoke on the floor, grappling with his wife in an attempt to get the knife. According to the prosecutor: "He was shouting for help, there was blood everywhere." **Nualsee Barrow**, 37, denies attempted murder.

Further murderous news comes from **Dallas**, where a 13-year-old boy claims that videogames led him to shoot his friend to death. The victim, 13-year-old **Jonathan Hogan**, was shot in the head and chest, and police believe that the gun was placed next to his skin for one of the shots. The suspect's lawyer has said that the deadly attack was prompted by a daylong binge of playing violent games, and that the boy was mimicking in-game action. Police seized 11 games, but have not revealed the titles.

To top it all off, **The National Enquirer** has printed grisly crime scene photos of the **Columbine** killers – allegedly inspired by **Doom** – claiming that one shot the other, as opposed to the double suicide previously reported. According to the notoriously reliable magazine, **Eric Harris** shot **Dylan Klebold** before popping himself. Either way, they'll never get to see **Doom III**.

**"Winchester Crown Court has heard how a jealous wife stabbed her sleeping husband after he confessed to an online affair"**



Fargas is on hand to ensure the game has the right feel.

## Disco fever

**Starsky & Hutch's** retro action picks up where *Driver* left off

**RECENTLY UNVEILED AT E3** by none other than Antonio Fargas (Huggy Bear in the original '70s series), Empire Interactive's forthcoming **Starsky & Hutch** puts you behind the wheel of the famous red Gran Torino of the coolest undercover cops in Bay City for some retro drive-and-shoot action.

"We have a rating system of viewer approval, which is really what you're playing for," explained Antonio, who is lending his voice-acting talents to the project, as well as making sure the game does justice to the cop classic. "The more cool things you do in the game, not just catching the baddies but tricks

with the car and good marksmanship, the more viewer points you earn."

Beyond this, the game basically blends the car-chase antics *Driver* with lightgun-style shooting, and looks set to be a fun arcade romp. The prospect of steering with one hand and shooting bad-ass street punks with the other seems promising enough, as does the two-player mode in which your mate plays Starsky to your Hutch. More details as soon as the first screenshots show up.

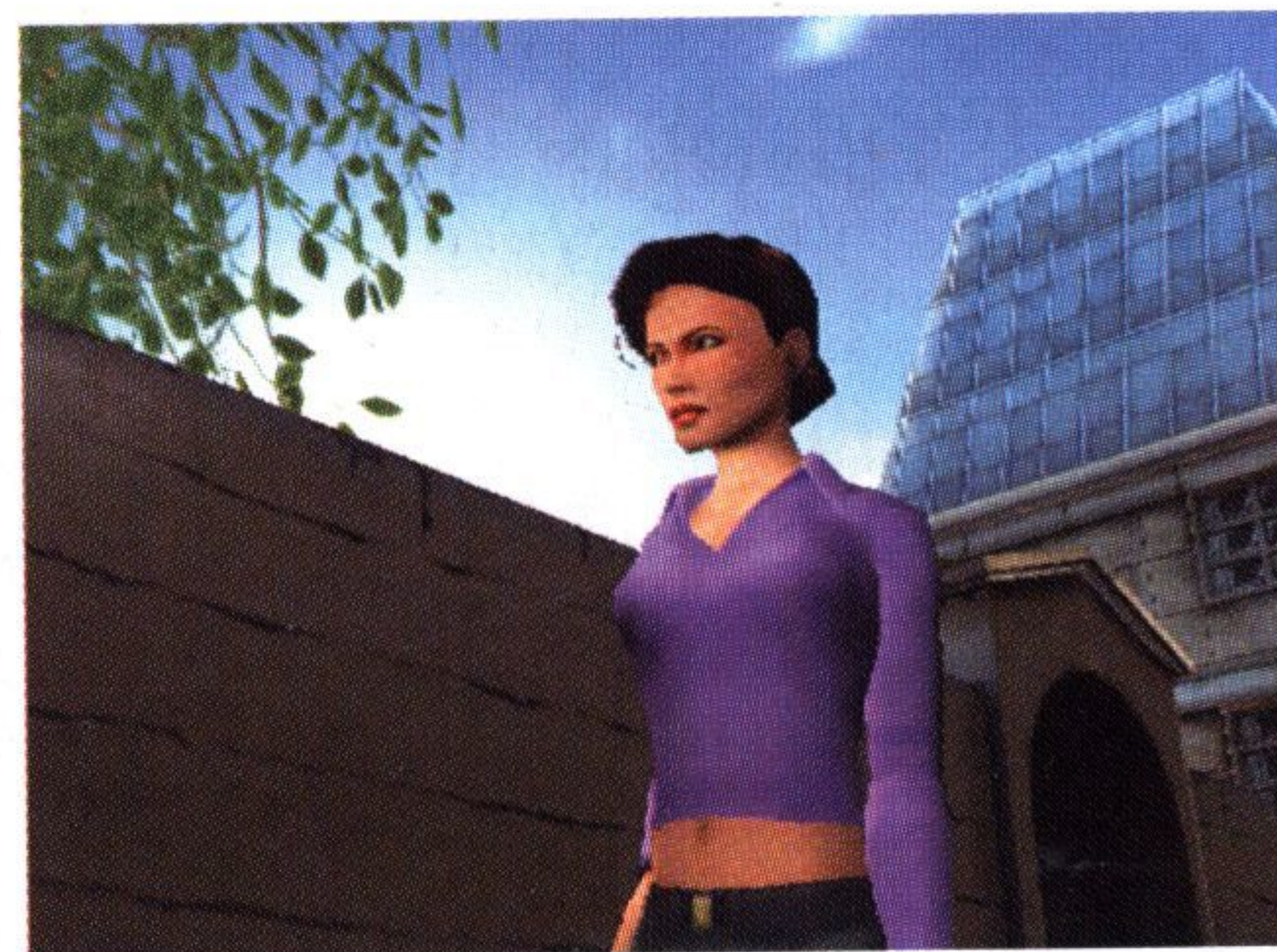
Empire Interactive • ETA Christmas 2002 • [us.empireinteractive.com](http://us.empireinteractive.com)

## Knives out

A classic series reawakens as we get our first glimpse of *Broken Sword 3*



George and Nico return for another conspiracy-filled adventure.



**REVOLUTION SOFTWARE HAS** released the first screenshots of *Broken Sword 3: The Sleeping Dragon*, the long-awaited sequel to the classic point-and-click adventure series. The screenshots have revealed a simple 3D world, but one with an unmistakable *Broken Sword* feel, as well as the return of protagonists George and Nico.

Clearly keen to marry traditional point-and-click adventure gameplay with the freedom of a fully 3D environment, York-based developer Revolution has incorporated three different gameplay elements in the new game. The first is puzzle-solving and all the standard adventure-style interactions that go with it. The second, exploration, allows you to navigate the game's environments in classic third-person action style, with all the usual jumping, climbing, fighting and even a degree of stealth action. The final gameplay

mechanic, dubbed 'action events', is a new device that tests your reactions during interactive cut-scenes, a bit like the QTEs in the Dreamcast game *Shenmue*.

The storyline in *The Sleeping Dragon* sees George and Nico racing against time to unravel an ancient conspiracy and put a halt to evil forces attempting to harness the hidden power of the Earth. Unbelievably, the game has been in development for five years, so we should be able to expect plenty of depth in terms of plot development.

All in all the game doesn't look too shabby, and we'll take a more in-depth look at it in the not too distant future.

Revolution Software • ETA Q3 2003 • [www.revolution.co.uk](http://www.revolution.co.uk)



# Wolf pack

*Wolfenstein* gets its first expansion pack, and it's a beauty



The single-player campaign will delve even deeper into the disturbing world of the Nazi occult.



**ENEMY TERRITORY IS** the newly announced expansion pack for *Return To Castle Wolfenstein*, boasting an unhealthy number of new additions to both the single and multiplayer games. So many, in fact, that developer Grey Matter has had to enlist the help of two other studios to put the whole thing together.

For starters, there's a substantial new single-player campaign being developed by Mad Doc Software (*Jane's Attack Squadron*). Details on this are still scant, but it has been revealed that it will take in a number of new locations including several Egyptian levels. While this alone would justify the add-on pack's existence, there's also to be a host of additions to the brilliant multiplayer side of the game, these being handled by Splash Damage (best known for the Q3 *Fortress* mod). New maps are of course

a given, but a new character class is also being added – the covert ops man, boasting silenced weaponry and the ability to disguise himself in the uniforms of fallen enemies. The engineer class is being given new attributes, such as the ability to build forward spawn points and bridges as well as drop land mines. Other tweaks include a new automap feature to help you keep an eye on team-mates.

But possibly the most significant addition comes from Grey Matter itself: multiplayer bots. The lack of bot support in the objective-based multiplayer mode has been a source of much dismay since the game launched, and this addition alone could make *Enemy Territory* a must-have.

Mad Doc/Splash Damage/Grey Matter • ETA Christmas • [www.activision.com/games/wolfenstein](http://www.activision.com/games/wolfenstein)

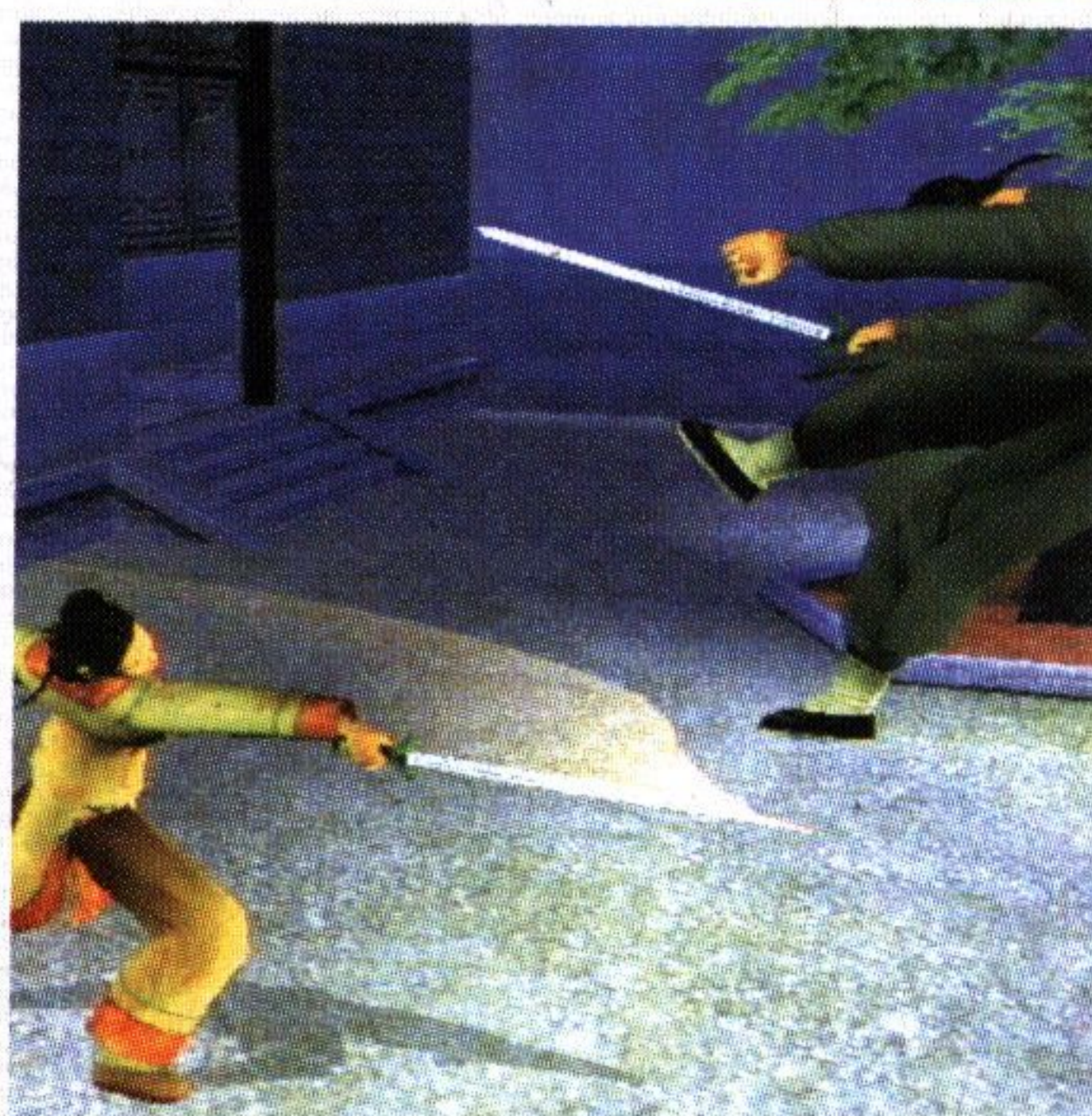
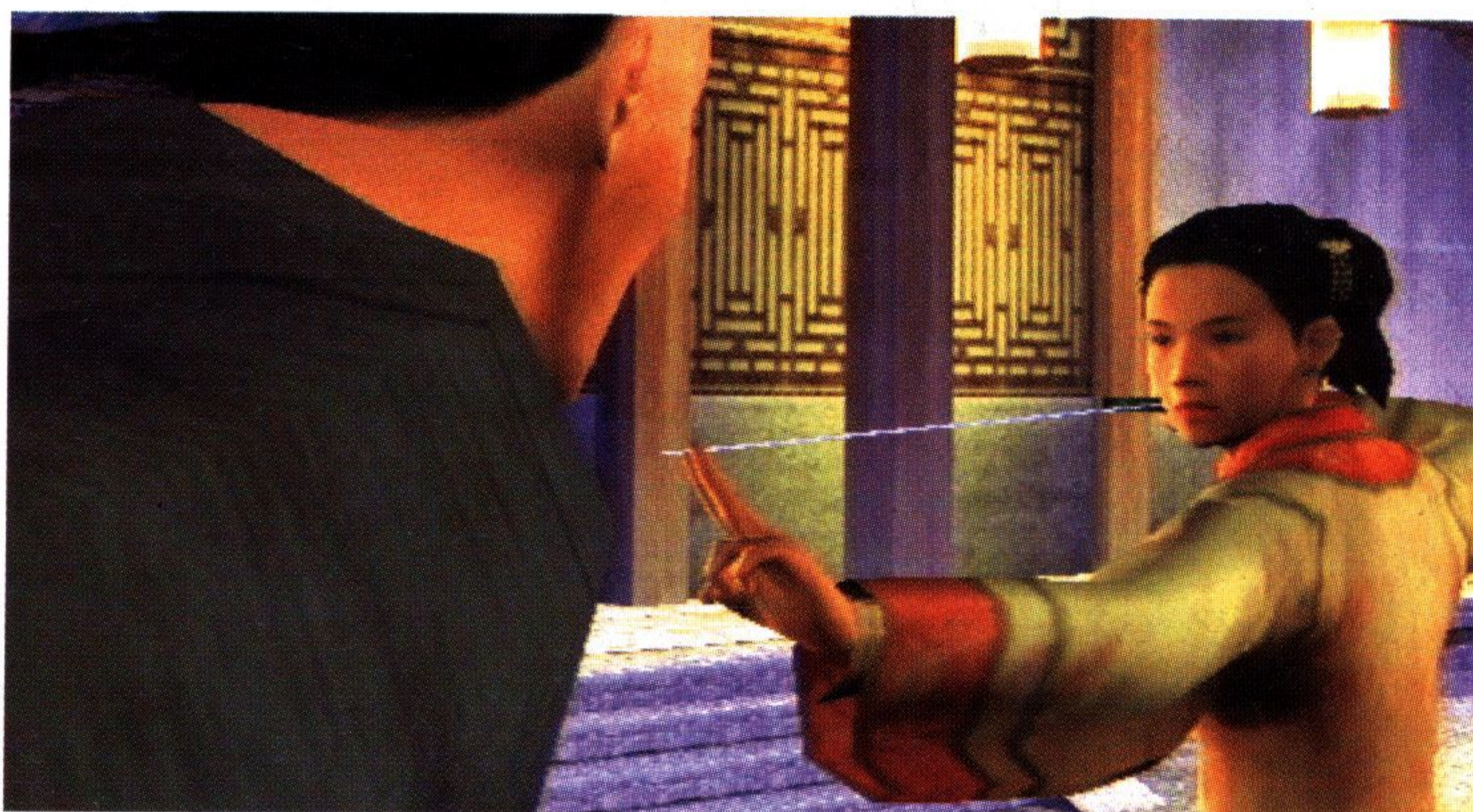
# Way of the dragon

Live by the sword, in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

**ANG LEE'S** *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is without doubt one of the finest and most lavish examples of the heroic swordplay genre ever committed to celluloid, and while its convoluted love story doesn't really lend itself all that well to a game, the high-flying martial arts depicted in the film most certainly do. In fact, now that we think about it, the exaggerated wire-assisted action seen in Hong Kong chop socky flicks has been begging for a satisfactory videogame reproduction for years.

While it's a bit too early to say if Ubi Soft's forthcoming *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* game will fill this void, the 30 per cent complete build of the game we got our hands on at E3 certainly suggested it's taking a few shadow-steps in the right direction. Essentially a third-person 3D action/slice 'em up, the game allows you to take control of any of three (maybe four) of the film's central characters, each out to exact revenge on the scheming Jade Fox. Though only the PS2 version of the game was playable at the show, the gameplay is clearly heading down a very arcadey path, with an emphasis on combos, special moves and power-ups. A chi meter, filled by dispatching enemy swordsmen, gauges the amount of power available for special moves, which include flying, hopping around on rooftops and super-spinny combo attacks.

While what we've seen of the game so far suggests little more than a nice-looking console fighting game, we're hoping for a great deal more depth and variety in the finished product. The world certainly doesn't need another bad martial arts game.



Coding duties have fallen to Japanese developer Genki, also hard at work on *Phantom Crash* (see page 26).

Genki • ETA TBC • [www.ubi.com](http://www.ubi.com)

## SHORTS

### SUPER-SEQUEL



Irrational Games has confirmed work on a sequel to its excellent tactical RPG *Freedom Force*. According to his original three-game vision, series creator Ken Levine plans to incorporate a '70s comic book aesthetic for the sequel, and may also shift the emphasis to create more of a straight role-playing experience.

### LORDS GO FOURTH



After a lengthy foray into real time with the *Warlords Battlecry* games, Strategic Studies Group is getting back to its turn-based roots with the announcement of *Warlords IV: Heroes Of Etheria*. Largely reprising the blend of fantasy role-playing and turn-based strategy showcased in the excellent *Warlords III: Reign of Heroes*, the new sequel is due from Ubi Soft around Christmas.

### RAY OF HOPE



*Project BG&E* is the new action-adventure game from *Rayman* creator Michel Ancel. While reminiscent of *Rayman* in terms of art direction, there's a much greater variety of gameplay evident. "Our new game engine has allowed us to integrate a whole universe in one game including mountains, cities, planets and more," says Michel.

### GOT THE POWER



Fans of Saturday morning cartoons of the early '80s will be pleased to hear that TDK Mediactive (*The Land Before Time Preschool Adventure*) has picked up the rights to publish PC games based on *The Masters Of The Universe*. There's no word yet on potential release dates, but a rhythm action game hasn't been ruled out.



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# VOTE FOR THE HOTTEST GAMES OF THE LAST 12 MONTHS

## THE VOTING

The industry's biggest awards bash, **The Golden Joystick Awards**, is where YOU, the playing public, get to vote YOUR favourite recent releases into gaming's Hall Of Fame.

So what are your favourite moments? Have you made it off Omaha Beach in *Medal Of Honor* without dying, or completed *GTA III* without getting arrested or hospitalised once?

Do you think these or other recent releases rank among the finest gaming experiences ever, and that the fantastically talented developers behind them deserve some sort of medal for services to gaming? Well **here's your chance to register your appreciation** and vote for the hottest games of the last 12 months.

There are 14 award categories for you to vote in (see right), and to qualify the titles must have been released between 15.09.01 and 15.09.02. Voting is easy – simply visit [www.goldenjoystick.co.uk](http://www.goldenjoystick.co.uk) and submit your votes.

Everyone who votes will be entered into a prize draw where you have the chance to **win FANTASTIC gaming prizes.** You could also be one of **FIVE lucky people picked to attend the awards** with a friend on October 28 2002 at the Dorchester Hotel, London, where you can see the chosen gods of the games business pick up their awards.

You can enter all or just some of the categories on the right. Make sure you have your say – vote online now at [www.goldenjoystick.co.uk](http://www.goldenjoystick.co.uk). Voting opens on July 8 2002.

## THE CATEGORIES

- Game of the year
- PC game of the year
- PS2 game of the year
- Xbox game of the year
- GameCube game of the year
- Handheld game of the year
- Online game of the year
- British developer of the year
- Publisher of the year
- Hardware of the year
- Game innovation of the year (PC)
- Game innovation of the year (console)
- Most wanted game of Christmas 2002
- Retailer of the year

*Awards are subject to change*

vote online at: [www.goldenjoystick.co.uk](http://www.goldenjoystick.co.uk)





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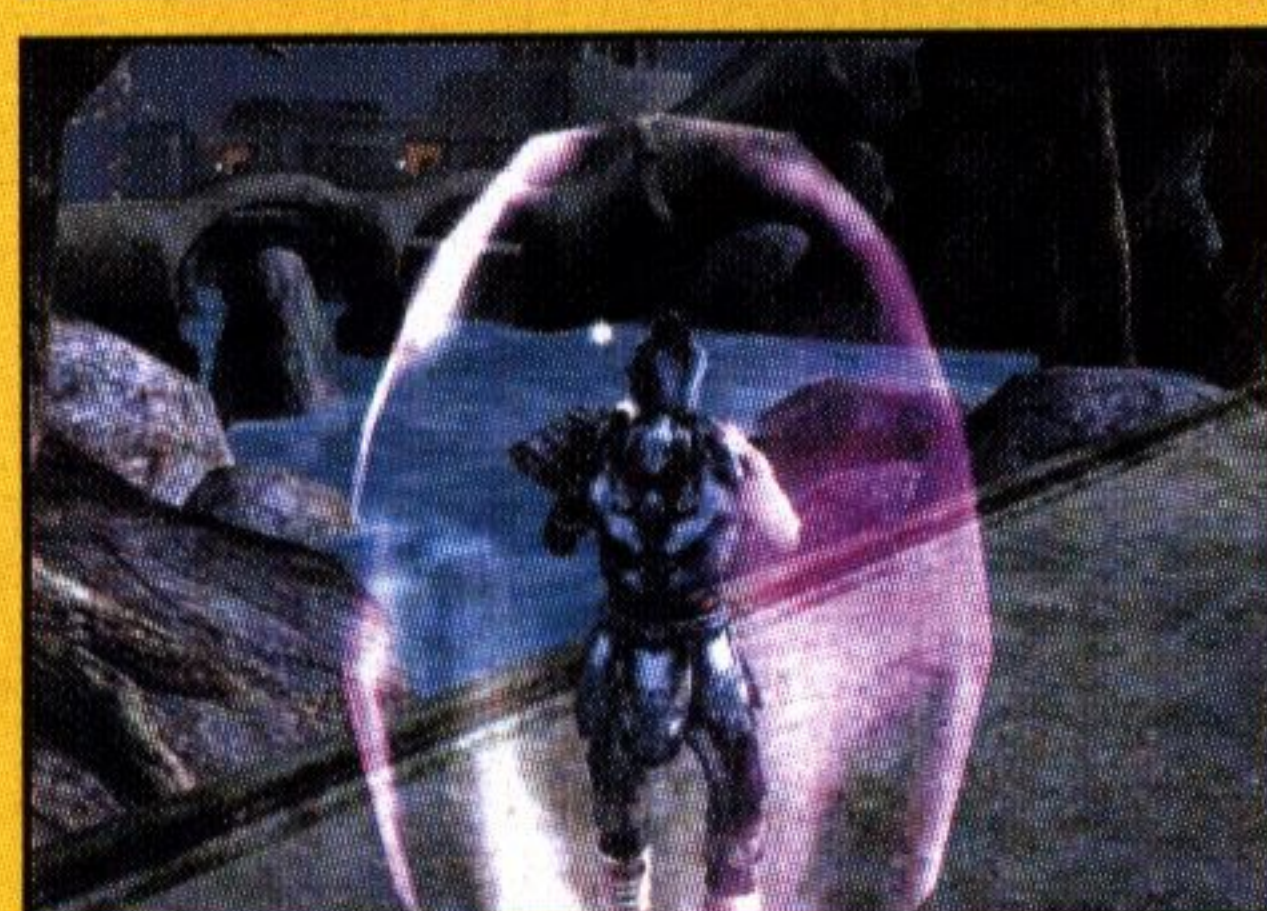
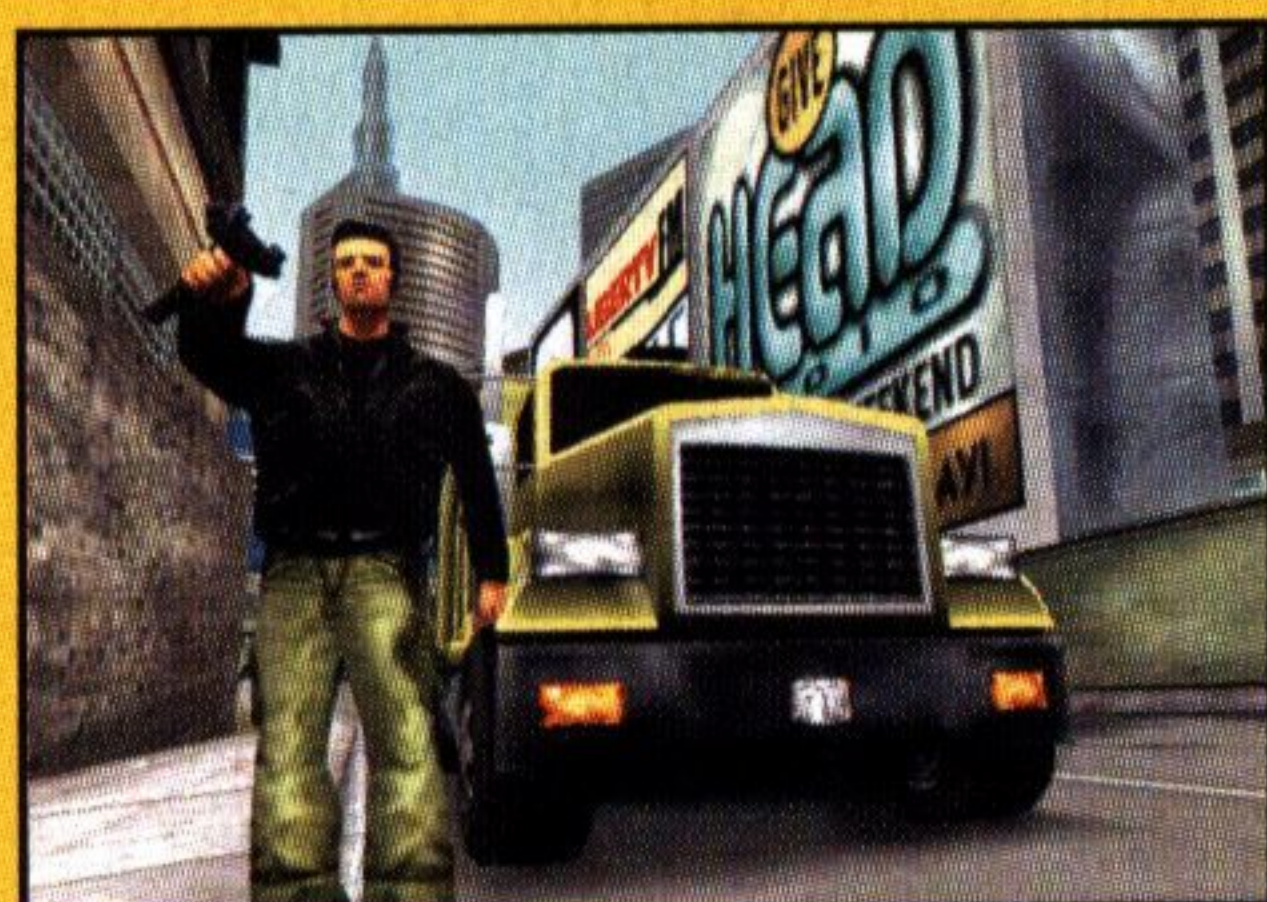
# CHARTS

In association with **VIRGIN MEGASTORES**

Your one-touch guide to game releases past, present and future. Whether a game is lost, looming or selling like sim-cakes, this is where you'll find it

## ChartTrack

## TOP 10



		TITLE	WEEKS IN CHART	SCORE
1	NEW	<b>GRAND THEFT AUTO III</b>	2	95%
2	NEW	SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II: DOUBLE HELIX	1	92%
3	NEW	THE ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND	1	94%
4	▼	THE SIMS: ON HOLIDAY	9	66%
5	▼	STAR WARS: JEDI KNIGHT II – JEDI OUTCAST	10	91%
6	▼	MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT	16	94%
7	NEW	DIE HARD: NAKATOMI PLAZA	2	74%
8	▼	2002 FIFA WORLD CUP	6	72%
9	▼	THE SIMS	121	86%
10	▼	THE SIMS: HOT DATE	28	71%

### YOUR SHOUT

Have your say at [www.pczone.co.uk](http://www.pczone.co.uk)

Bloody hell – *Die Hard* in the top ten? I know you guys reckon it has 'hidden depths' and all, but it still looks like a prize turd, and there's so many other better FPSs around.  
**dothack**

Where the almighty is *Clone Campaigns*? It came out at the same time as *Morrowind*, so where is it? Not selling obviously, which is a shame as it's a great expansion pack.  
**\_pele\_**

It's a sad state of affairs when the appearance of only three *Sims* games in the top ten seems like cause for rejoicing, but strangely enough it does. Wa-hey!  
**d\_sanchez**

Oh man, *Grand Theft Auto III* is sooo good – it just keeps on giving. To hell with reality – I've found a better place.  
**kimchee\_**

Virgin megastores

## TOP 10

## COMPETITION

Virgin megastores

- 1 THE SIMS: ON HOLIDAY
- 2 DUNGEON SIEGE
- 3 MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT
- 4 HOOLIGANS: STORM OVER EUROPE
- 5 STAR WARS: JEDI KNIGHT II – JEDI OUTCAST
- 6 2002 FIFA WORLD CUP
- 7 CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 01/02
- 8 COMMAND & CONQUER: RENEGADE
- 9 GLOBAL OPS
- 10 MONSTERS – INC. MINI GAMES

### Win the entire Virgin Top 10!

Once again, **PC ZONE** and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Virgin Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer the following simple question:

**QUESTION:** The 95% we awarded *Grand Theft Auto III* is the highest mark we've given since what home-grown masterpiece?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with all the information requested, to the address below.

- Please include your name, address, daytime phone number, email address, job title and company name (and age if under 18).
- Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies.
- Are you a current subscriber to **PC ZONE**?

Answers on a postcard to: **PC ZONE** Chart Compo (CPCZ8A), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5RZ. Closing date: July 24, 2002

**Terms and conditions:** winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply.



## CHART COMMENT

BASED ON CHART-TRACK TOP 10

**WHAT A LINE-UP.** It's like Christmas has come early in the charts this month, with five bona fide **PC ZONE** classics in the UK's top-sellers (along with a bunch of other predictable shelf-fillers). Not sure what *Die Hard*'s doing in there, though.

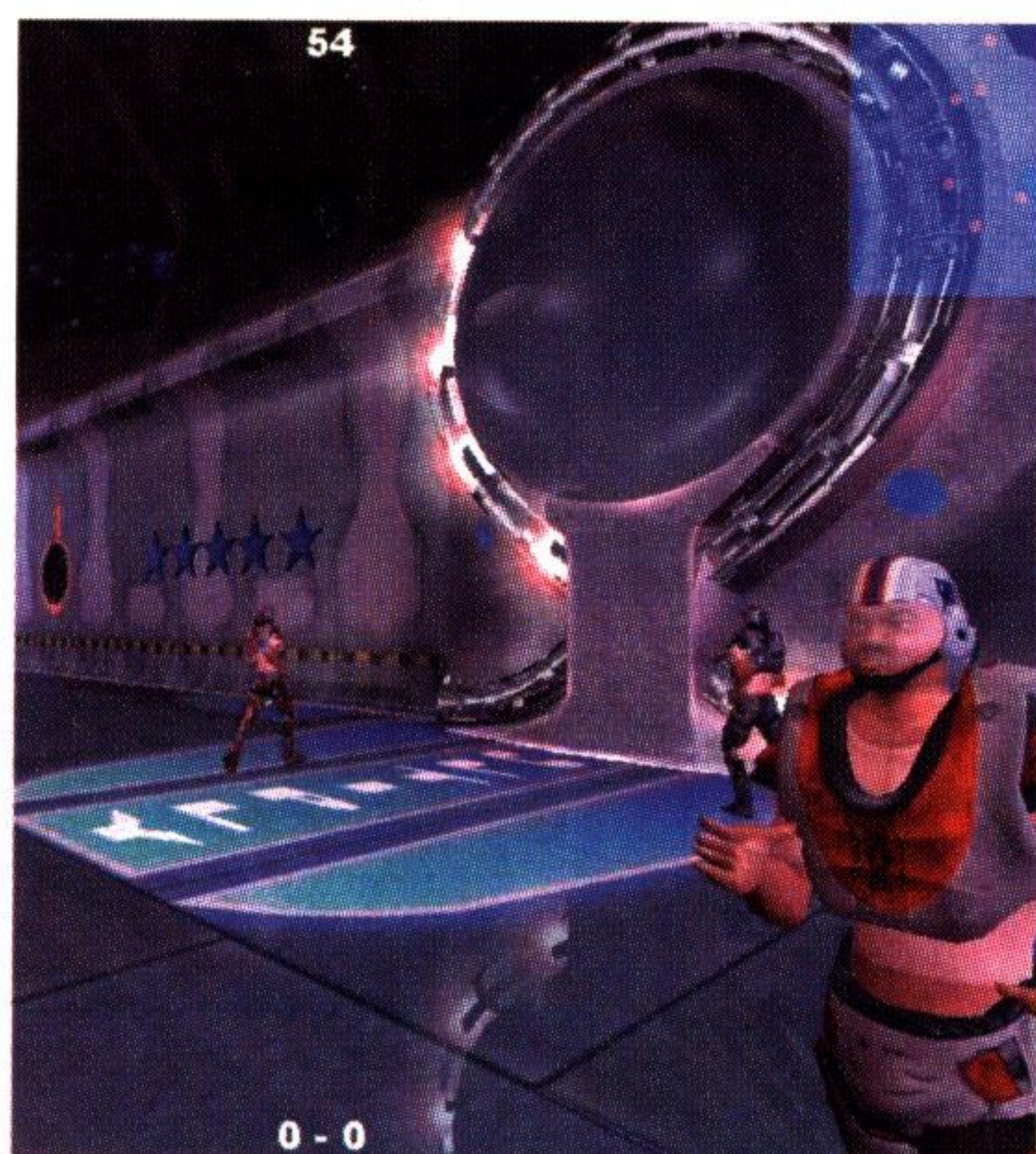
If you haven't read our *Soldier Of Fortune II* review yet, then stop right here and turn to page 64. For the rest of you, you'll already know that our lingering doubts about this game were blown into messy gibs as soon as we got our hands on the finished product, and it fully deserves to be sitting in second place. It's certainly no shame to be sitting below the phenomenal *Grand Theft Auto III* either, although with a one-two combo like this parental groups everywhere must be getting themselves in a right flap. If you haven't already got hold of a copy of this must-have crime sim, put it on your to-do list, pronto.

Then of course there's our new favourite role-playing game *Morrowind*, which does well against some tough competition to smite its way into third place. It's the first RPG for years that every member of the **ZONE** team has made sure to find time to play, and it's good to see a few other punters doing likewise.

Anthony Holden

# MISSING IN ACTION

The war's not over until the last game comes home...



## Speedball Arena

**THE BITMAP BROTHERS** have been very quiet lately. It's been a long time since they've produced a true classic, and since we're yet to be convinced that their latest title, *World War II: Frontline Command*, is anything more than a quick fundraiser to take advantage of the languishing *Steel Soldiers* engine, most of our hopes are pinned on the 3D translation of everyone's favourite future sport, *Speedball Arena*. A bunch of new screenshots appeared just prior to E3, confirming that progress on the game is continuing apace, and that it is to be a remarkably faithful translation of its 2D forbears. Fingers crossed on this one.

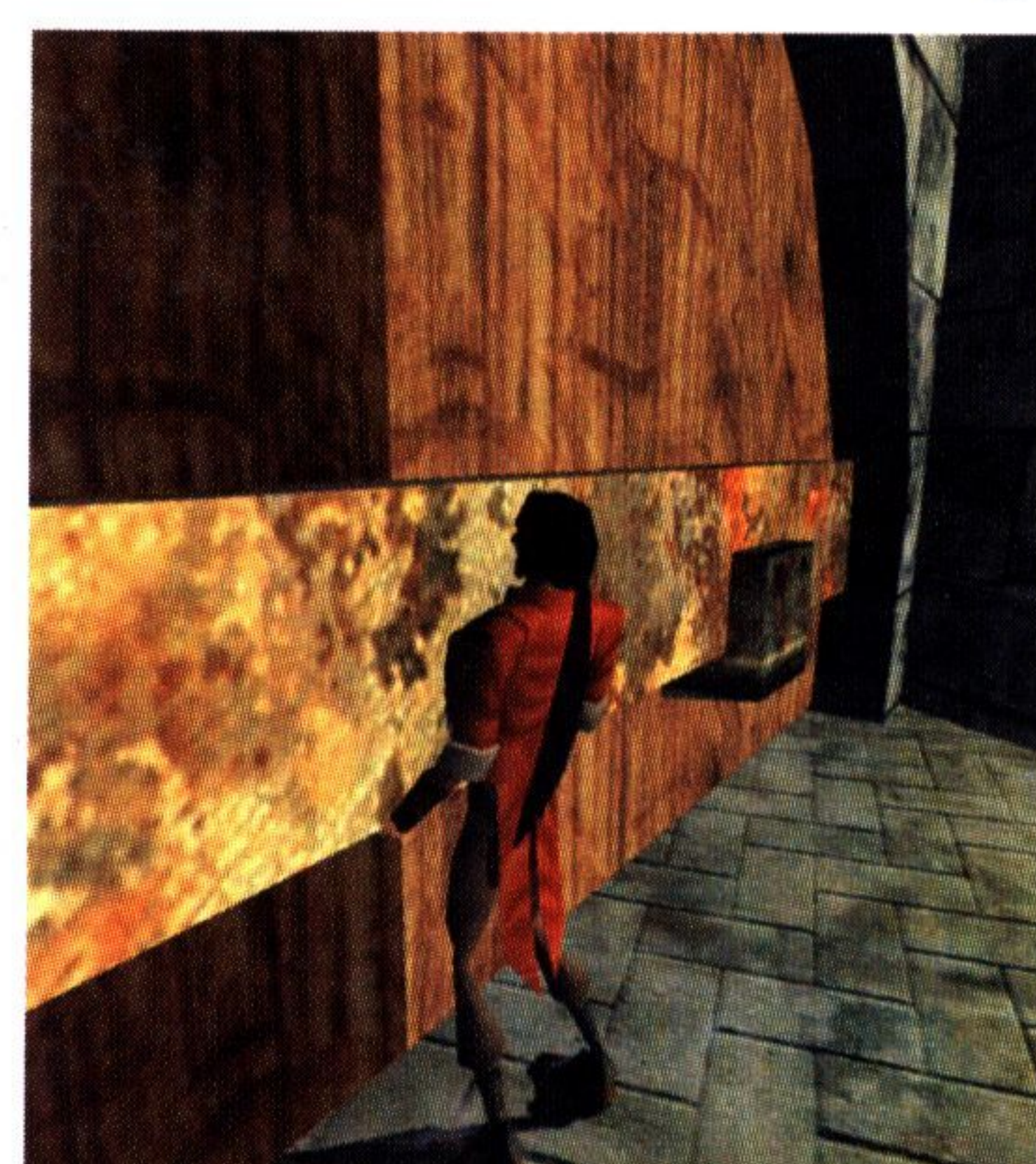
The Bitmap Brothers • ETA TBC • [www.speedballarena.com](http://www.speedballarena.com)



## MOH: Team Assault

**WE WERE GENUINELY** expecting to see something of this eagerly awaited *Medal Of Honor* add-on at E3, but we were to be disappointed. The EA chaps told us they weren't ready to show it because, "*Medal Of Honor* basically stole the show last year, and we wanted to wait till we had something that could do the same with *Team Assault*." Which probably means they haven't started it yet. When we suggested that the ambitious expansion pack, which plans to overhaul the AI and place additional emphasis on teamwork, may blow out into a full sequel, they just shrugged nervously. Never fear though, we're all over this one.

2015 • ETA Christmas • [mohaa.ea.com](http://mohaa.ea.com)



## Galleon

**A MISSING IN** Action favourite, this swashbuckling third-person action-adventure was at E3, for about the fifth year running, though it kept a fairly low profile. Amazingly enough, the game was actually presented in playable form for the first time, though only on the Xbox. It may have been an unwise move, as the build we saw was riddled with technical problems, but the gameplay still looks as simple and compelling as ever. We were actually on the plane back from Los Angeles with *Galleon* mastermind Toby Gard, although we didn't disturb him. After four years of development we figured he could use a bit of a break.

Confounding Factor • ETA Christmas 2016 • [www.confounding-factor.com/galleon](http://www.confounding-factor.com/galleon)

## US TOP 10

## INCOMING!

- 1 THE SIMS: VACATION
- 2 STAR WARS: JEDI KNIGHT II – JEDI OUTCAST
- 3 GRAND THEFT AUTO III
- 4 SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II: DOUBLE HELIX
- 5 THE SIMS
- 6 THE ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND
- 7 SW: G'TIC B'GROUNDS – CLONE CAMPAIGNS
- 8 DUNGEON SIEGE
- 9 MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT
- 10 ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

These are the big games that are going on sale in the next month or so. All dates are correct at the time of going to press, but we'd check ahead before running down to the shops in the driving rain.

GAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE DATE
Neverwinter Nights	Infogrames	June 28
Op Flashpoint: Resistance	Codemasters	June 28
Freedom Force	EA	June 28
Sid Meier's Sim Golf	EA	July 5
Warcraft III: Reign Of Chaos	VU Games	July 5
The Sum Of All Fears	Ubi Soft	July 25
Mafia	Take2	July 26
Unreal Tournament 2003	Infogrames	August 2
Divine Divinity	CDV	August 19
Conflict: Desert Storm	SCI	September 6



# IT'S A DEAL



You've been betrayed and left for dead. Now you're taking revenge, unless the city gets you first. Mob bosses need a favour, crooked cops need help and street gangs want you dead. You'll have to rob, steal and kill just to stay out of serious trouble. Anything can happen out there.

WHATEVER TURNS YOU ON

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It looks so real you can almost smell the gunpowder and the tyre burns.



## UPDATE

# Show some respect MAFIA

As far back as he can remember, **Mark Hill** has always wanted to stop overusing film quotes. But then we made him an offer he couldn't refuse

### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Illusion Softworks

**PUBLISHER** Take 2

**WEBSITE** [www.mafia-game.com](http://www.mafia-game.com)

**OUT** August

### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- The freedom of *GTA III* combined with a proper story
- Incredibly detailed graphics
- A massive living city to put *Grand Theft Auto III* to shame.
- Created by the talent behind *Hidden & Dangerous*

## CV



### ILLUSION SOFTWARES

Burst onto the scene with one of the best tactical shooters ever, but haven't done much since, up till now.

**1999** The marvellous *Hidden & Dangerous* is released. Even though it was filled with bugs nothing could stop us from loving it. It was followed by the disappointing *Fight For Freedom* add-on.

**2000** *Flying Heroes* is a pretty rubbish attempt at airborne deathmatch as you shoot from the backs of flying dragons.

**2002** *Hidden & Dangerous 2* has gone all quiet, but *Mafia* will surely set the world on fire.



Go on, get yourself out of the rain for a bit.

**HUMAN BEINGS** are funny creatures. We want complete freedom to do what we want, with full anarchical autonomy and without the constraints of authority, but at the same time we want to feel we belong in a group, so that our lives may have a proper structure and meaning. The life of a gangster – or at least, the fictional glamorisation of that life – provides the perfect balance. You are completely outside the law, superior to all other men by virtue of your affiliation and your gun, making money by the bucketload and able to perform daily acts of such viciousness and cruelty you'd be labelled a monster if you were a normal person. You get the best table at the most expensive restaurants or you shoot the head waiter in the kneecaps. You treat your mother like she's the Virgin Mary and then sleep with a string of women before beating them up and discarding them. You take what you want, when you want it, and kill whoever stands in the way. At the same time, the Mafioso's life is highly structured, with a rigid hierarchy, rules you must follow and a bastardised samurai-style code of honour binding the whole thing together.

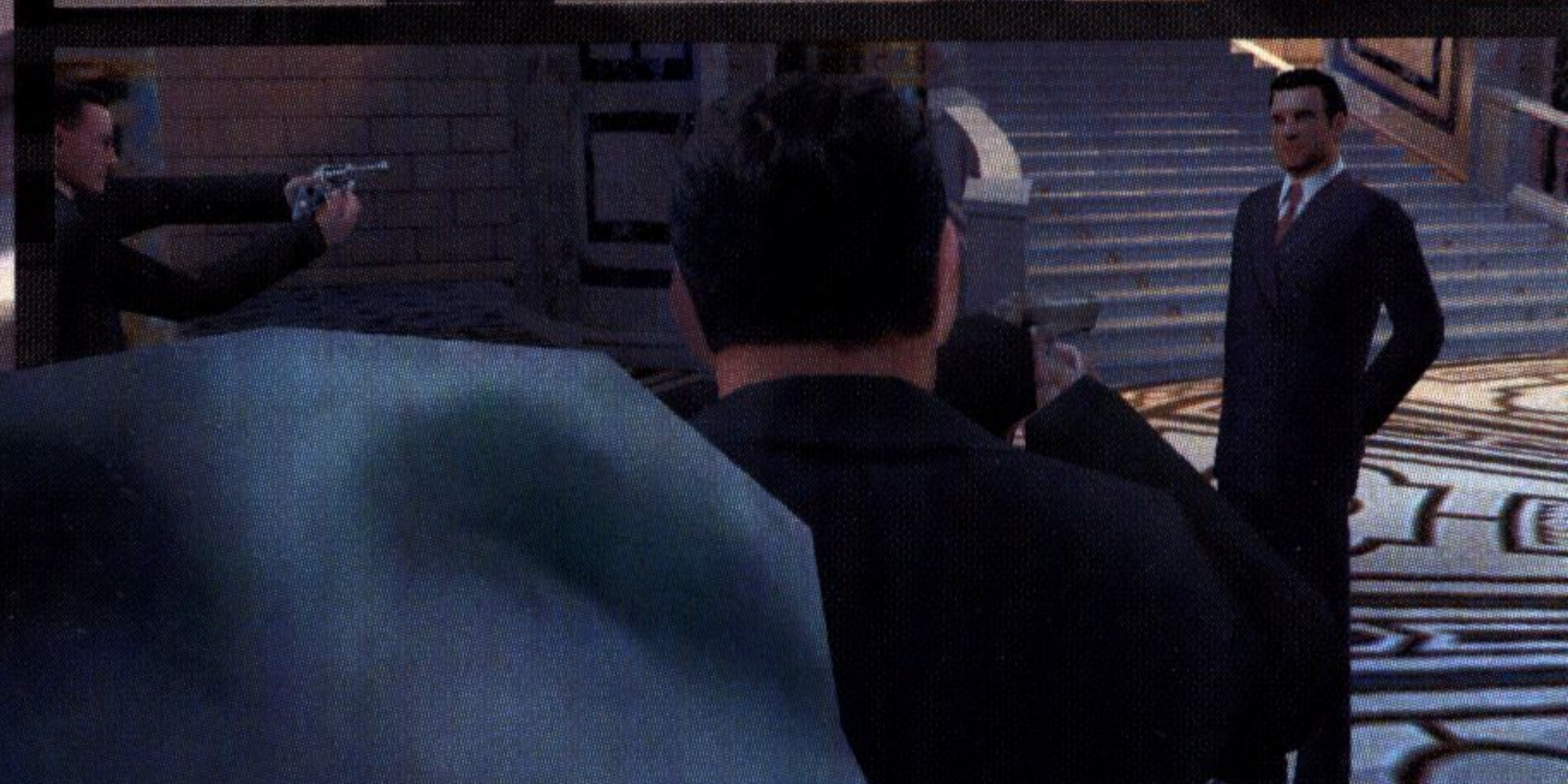
And it is precisely this balance between freedom and structure that determines whether a modern game is any good or not.

### KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY

*Grand Theft Auto III* provided a lot of the freedom, but not a lot of structure and meaning. It's a chaotic cartoon of violence and wild fun, leaving you with no real responsibilities and no real consequences for your actions. It has missions, but they're just a way of linking the great times you have stealing cars and running people over before getting out and kicking them in the groin till your foot hurts. Your character is a vacuous bonehead with no motivation except money, no loyalties and even less brains. I'm not saying it isn't one of the greatest games ever made (because it most certainly is), just that wannabe Tony Sopranos and Henry Hills won't find the full satisfaction of belonging to a criminal family, and growing as a person and a delinquent within it.

In *Mafia*, you have a proper story, a character who feels, thinks and changes and a world that reacts to every one of your actions, leaving a





"You think I'm funny?"

"South of the river? You've gotta be joking mate."

**"The entire development team has watched just about all the mafia films available"**

**LUKE VERNON**  
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER





**"There are prostitutes, street punks, politicians, bootleggers, cops on the take, priests and sailors"**

**LUKE VERNON**  
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Weapons include the Colt 1911, a sniper rifle, Molotov cocktails, grenades and the all-important Tommy gun.

trail of consequences a mile wide. You can't murder a street full of people and get rid of the police chasing you by running over a couple of star symbols floating in the air, and it's not about laughing out loud while performing the most outrageous transgressions you can think of. That doesn't necessarily make it a better game, but it does make it more like a proper recreation of criminal life.

#### A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN

Not that this is some kind of game-on-rails. Like I said before, it's all about finding a balance. We asked product development manager Luke Vernon just how different *Mafia* is from *Grand Theft Auto III*, since many people assume that this is just a 1930s version of it. "Both have large, living cities," he says. "But there the similarity more or less stops. In

*Mafia*, you get far more involved in the story and your progression through the Mafia family and through life. There are a wider variety of missions and settings in *Mafia* too, because we have more than 30 buildings with massively detailed interiors. Jobs take full advantage of the variety of locations and the variety of nuances each can provide. At the same time the player is permitted to deviate (on foot, by car, by tram or by train) from the mission route but the missions are so compelling that they will soon be back for more."

#### ROCK ON TOMMY

Despite all the available freedom, the story is at the heart of the game, and Illusion Softworks is determined to create a truly cinematic experience, with the kind of acting and dialogue rarely seen in games. Hopefully this won't mean a ludicrous, over-the-top script in the *Max Payne* vein, although *Mafia* does steal its narrative devices from films. The story itself is told – and played – through an old-movie style flashback, as veteran mobster Tommy recounts his life to a detective in the hope of receiving police protection. He starts off as a young taxi driver, whose

Where's the AA when you need them?

car is taken by a group of gangsters making a runaway and proves his great driving skills by delivering them to safety. He's then offered a job with the Salieri family and spends the next ten years working his way up the criminal ladder.

Luke described a typical mission for us. "It would start at the Salieri Bar with a discussion about a certain business topic, a few punks starting trouble in our territory, for example. You would then discuss with the Don what to do with them (ie take 'em out or teach 'em a lesson). The first would involve guns while the second would involve knuckledusters and baseball bats. You would then go with Paulie or Sam to collect the right tools for the job before getting in your car and reaching your destination."

At the same time though, you'll be able to go off exploring and do your own thing. "There are certain missions where you'll be constrained by time," he says, "but otherwise you can just roam about. It is also possible to approach each mission many different ways."

#### KEEPING IT REAL

It's the detail that makes your eyes goggle and your mouth salivate. Every possible attention has been paid to recreate the period properly, from the Tommy guns to the cars (more than 60 of them) and absolutely anything else you can imagine. "The entire development team has spent an age watching just about all the mafia films available," says Luke, "with some of the biggest influences coming from *The Godfather* (check out the boat or the revolver in the toilet scenes). This has helped us to ensure that the game has a true feel to it and to make sure that it

## GANGSTER-STRIKE



#### SO WHAT ABOUT THE MULTIPLAYER THEN?

With some people expressing disappointment at the lack of online play in *GTA III*, it's going to come as a bitter blow to hear that Illusion Softworks have also ripped the multiplayer from *Mafia*'s initial release. The word has it that the team could have added a racing game but didn't think that it reflected or added to the single-player core of *Mafia*. By way of consolation we can confirm that the team is still working on multiplayer components to be released either as a patch or as part of an expansion pack at a later date, with standard Capture the Flag and Deathmatch modes, as well as another unique mode. Seeing as they're describing this as *Counter-Strike* with cars, it could well prove to be something that's worth waiting for. As usual, we'll keep you up to date with the very latest information as soon as it breaks.

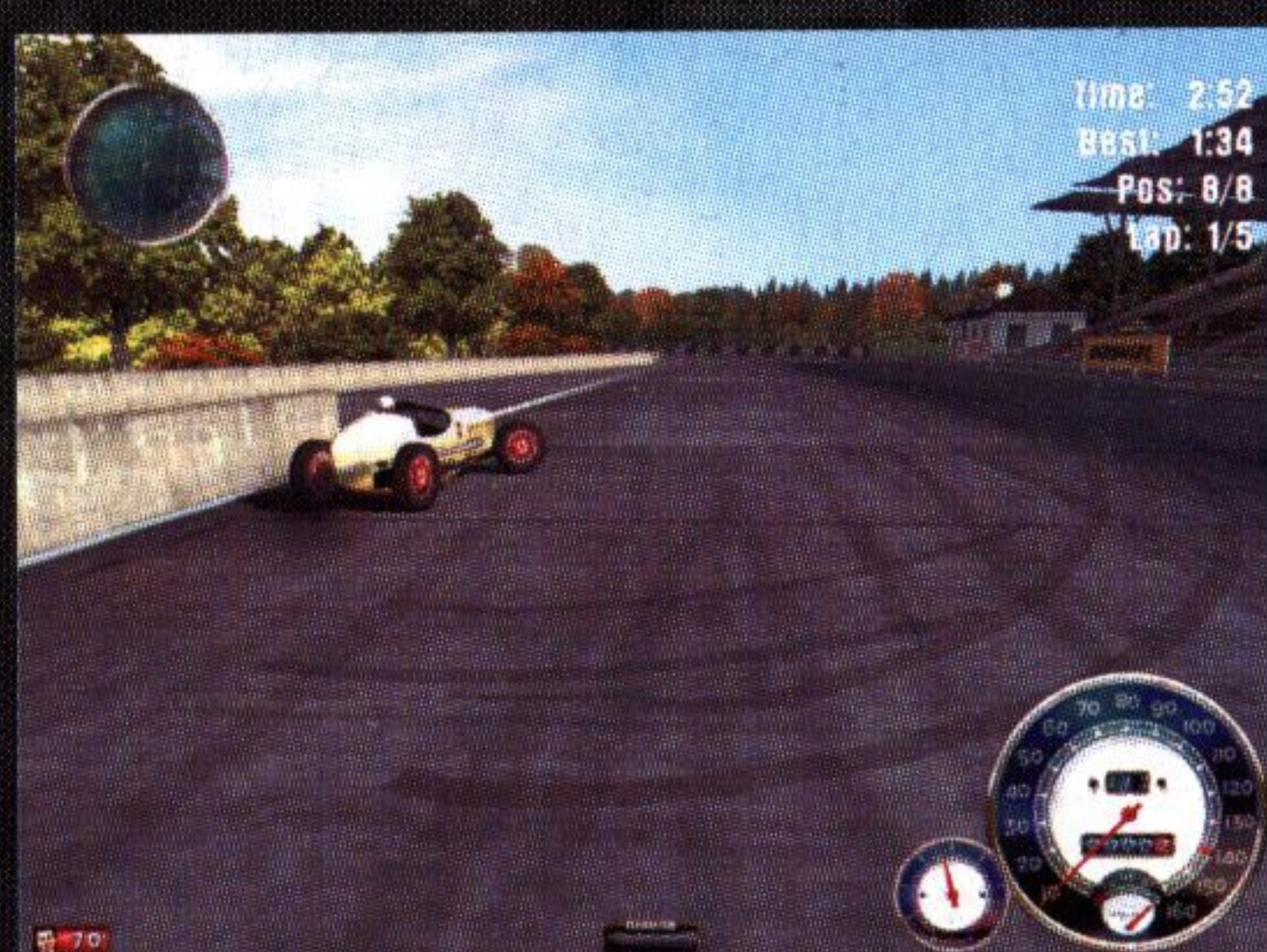


You can also use your fists to show people who's boss.





We're hoping there won't be any "Mamma mia, Luigi!" type of accents.



There are places in the countryside where you can race cars.

appeals to those who are into their mafia movies as well as games."

Certainly, the range of characters you meet is the sort that populate every gangster flick of the last 70 years. "There are prostitutes, street punks, politicians, bootleggers, cops on the take, priests and even sailors." And each of them will act like an individual, creating a feeling of a world that is truly alive and one which reacts to everything you do realistically.

#### COP KILLER

Nowhere is this more evident than in the behaviour of cops. "If you run a red light and it is witnessed by the cops then they'll give chase and issue you with a ticket," says Luke. "However, if you decide not to stop or indeed ram the cop car to escape then you move to a wanted status, which will last until you lose the cops. If you get pulled over at this stage you will be arrested and the mission will end. The highest level of reaction is if you kill

someone and it is witnessed. The police will now be on high alert and cops on the beat as well as in cars will now be looking for you. If you are stopped while on this level of awareness the cops are not interested in arresting but shooting to kill."

But it's your interaction with other mafia types and the general public as well as the police that make it all come together. If it lives up to expectation *Mafia* will definitely be the total gangster game, a genre that has never produced a really quality title.

"We believe that where the games have failed before is from focusing too much on one aspect of the gangster lifestyle as opposed to encompassing the entire experience. *Mafia* is based on exactly this from when we first meet Tommy and he is thrown into the family, to his survival as he struggles to grow within the organisation." Find out in our exclusive review next month if it can really deliver. **PC**

## THE BUGS SLEEP WITH THE FISHES

### IT SHOULD BE GOOD, BUT WILL IT BE PLAYABLE?

Illusion Softworks established a massive reputation with *Hidden & Dangerous*, but this was slightly marred by the incredibly large number of bugs that plagued the title. I'll never forget the time I got one of my soldiers to lie down only to see him fall through the ground, reappear through a cloud and fall to his death miles below. At other times your soldiers would just die by stepping over some grass, climbing a ladder or falling out of a suddenly unsubstantial vehicle. Then there were the crashes and the problems getting your save games to work. It wouldn't have been so bad if the game wasn't so damn hard to start with.

Well, there's no chance of that happening this time. Illusion has been spending the last few months ironing out any problems, which is why the game has suffered so many delays. "After the feedback on the original *Hidden & Dangerous*, it has been a key issue to ensure that the game is as bug-free as possible," explains Luke. "This obviously takes time and a great deal of testing." Let's hope it works.



**MOVE TO THE CITY**



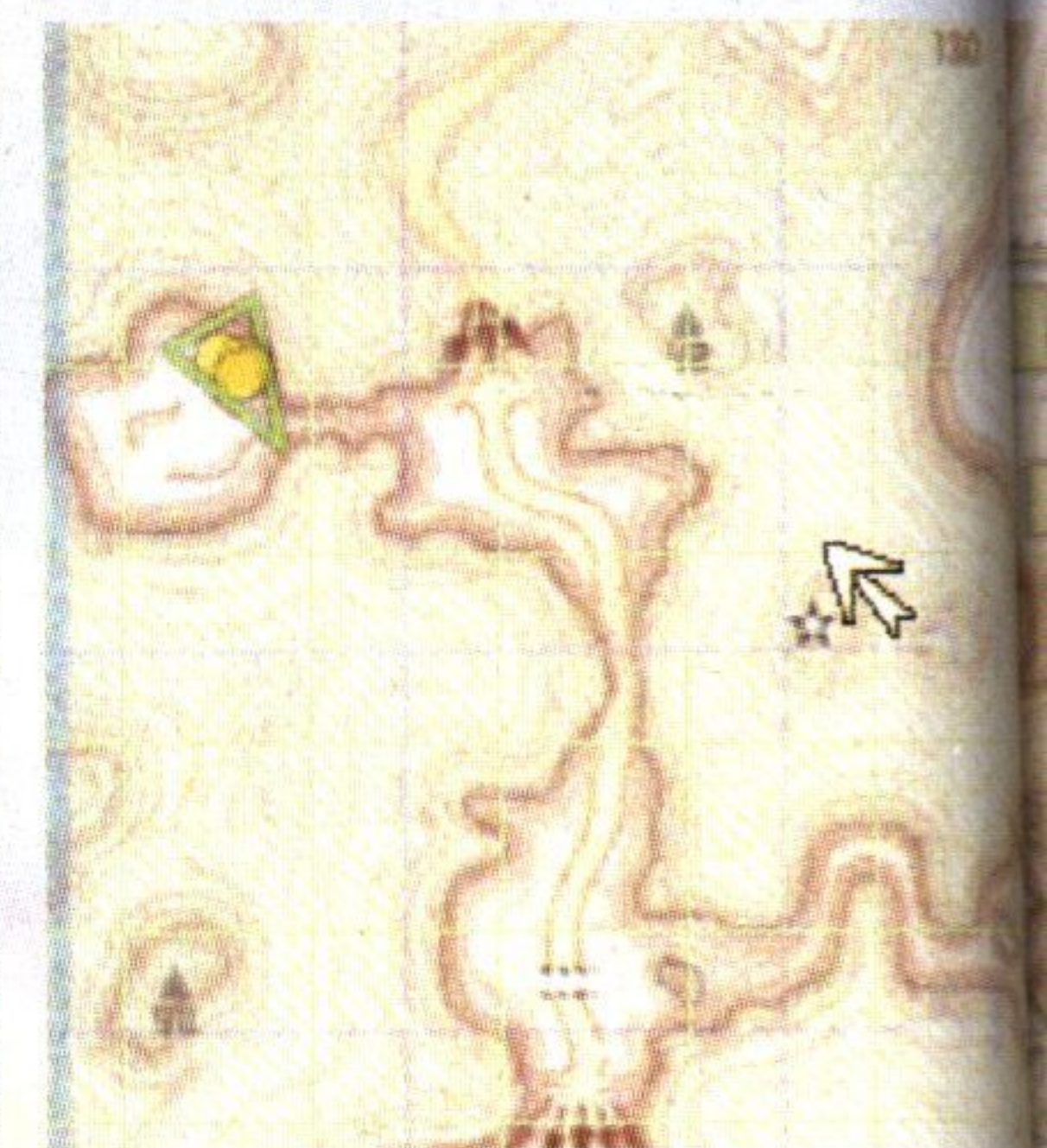
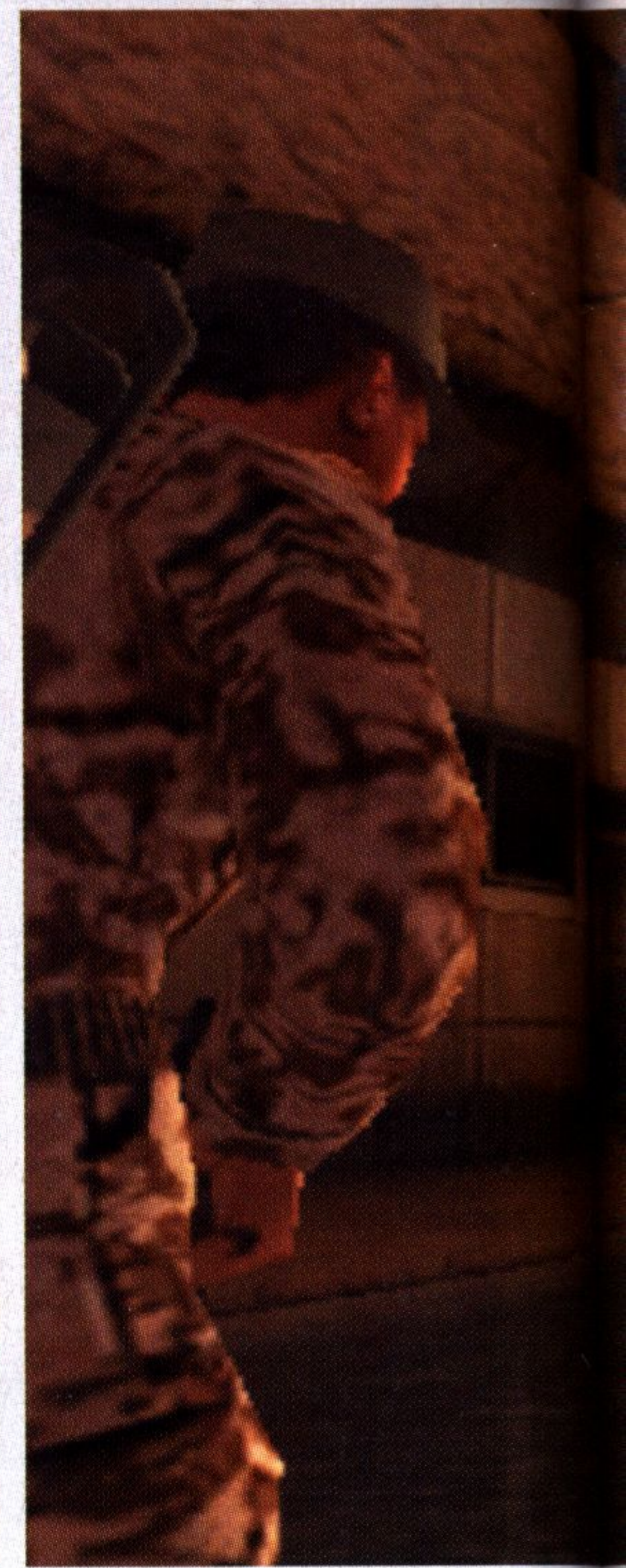
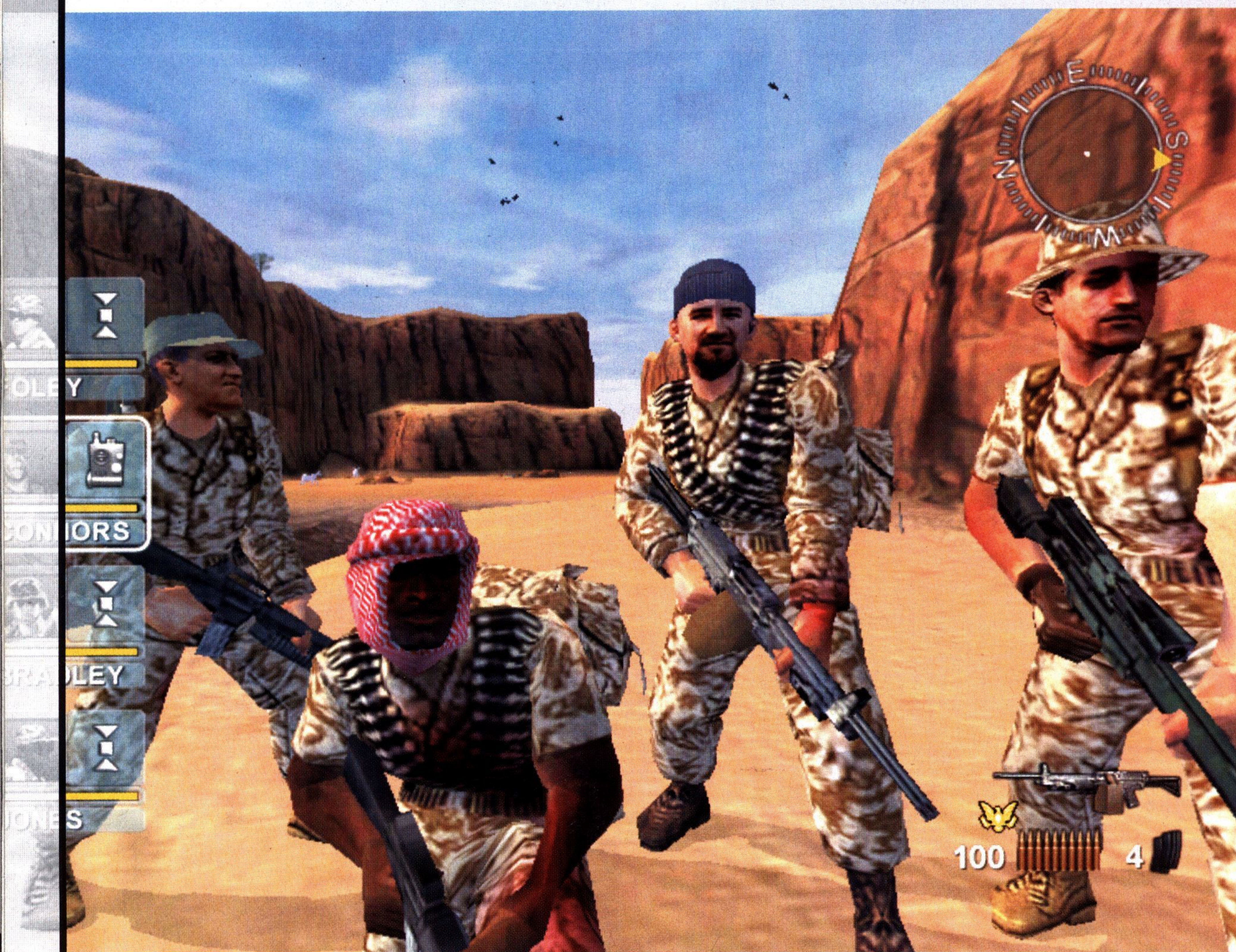
### CAN LOST HEAVEN COMPETE WITH LIBERTY CITY?

There is no greater feeling in a game than exploring a massive environment recreated in every detail, and functioning in every way. It's better than moving through corridors and rooms like big boxes. *GTA III*'s Liberty City is such a place, teeming with cars and pedestrians and full of shops, parks and stations. Just wandering around in a car is enough to make most people happy. But *Mafia*'s Lost Heaven could make it seem puny in comparison, simply because the new engine, LS3D, is capable of such gorgeous detail it really looks like a real city rather than a cartoon version of one. There are 12 square kilometres of slums, suburbs, industrial areas, farms, countryside, cathedrals, hotels, skyscrapers and absolutely everything else you'd find in a 1930s city. All styles, from architecture to clothing, are recreated in such detail you might as well be there. And, don't forget, there are also incredibly lush interiors to explore, not just streets and countryside.



Expect the game to reek of classic gangster films.





Your four-man team will all be specialists in certain fields, and possess individual skills.

#### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Pivotal Games

**PUBLISHER** SCI

**WEBSITE** [www.sci.co.uk](http://www.sci.co.uk)

**OUT** September

#### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's the official game based on the 1991 hit TV series
- Drive vehicles while shooting bearded men in the face
- You can play as the SAS
- Promising team AI

## Beating about with Bush

# CONFLICT: DESERT STORM

**Stormin' Richie Shoemaker, veteran of more than a thousand Gulf War CNN news reports, returns to inactive service**

**CV**

PIVOTAL  
GAMES

#### PIVOTAL GAMES

*Conflict: Desert Storm* is Pivotal's first game, before that they were Pumpkin Studios and between them the team have worked on dozens of games, from *Aliens* on the Spectrum (a personal favourite) to *Dungeon Master* and *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?*

**1999** *Warzone 2100* becomes the first full-3D RTS to get a PC ZONE Classic Award.

**2000** Pumpkin Studios is disbanded, it regroups as Pivotal.

**2001** *Conflict: Desert Storm* announced

**2002** A second *Desert Storm* conflict announced, maybe.

**PICK A WAR**, any war, and you can pretty much guarantee that it has been done to death on PC already. Well, OK then, the number of games featuring the Tet Offensive or Rorke's Drift have been pretty thin on the ground, and despite the potential carnage, Passchendaele hasn't seen much in the way of in-game footage, but generally, wherever there is war, us PC gamers are willing to fight. Just so long as the odds are stacked heavily in our favour.

So it's a little strange when you consider that the Gulf War has taken so long to reach our monitors. If there is one thing you can guarantee in a war action game it's a high ratio body count and they don't come any higher than the six week Desert Storm operation – according to

'official' figures Iraqi forces managed to kill about 150 of the Coalition forces, with a few more notched up by the US. However, according to US Central Command, 100,000 Iraqi soldiers were killed, while close to half a million others were either wounded, taken prisoner or



The desert can be a lonely place.





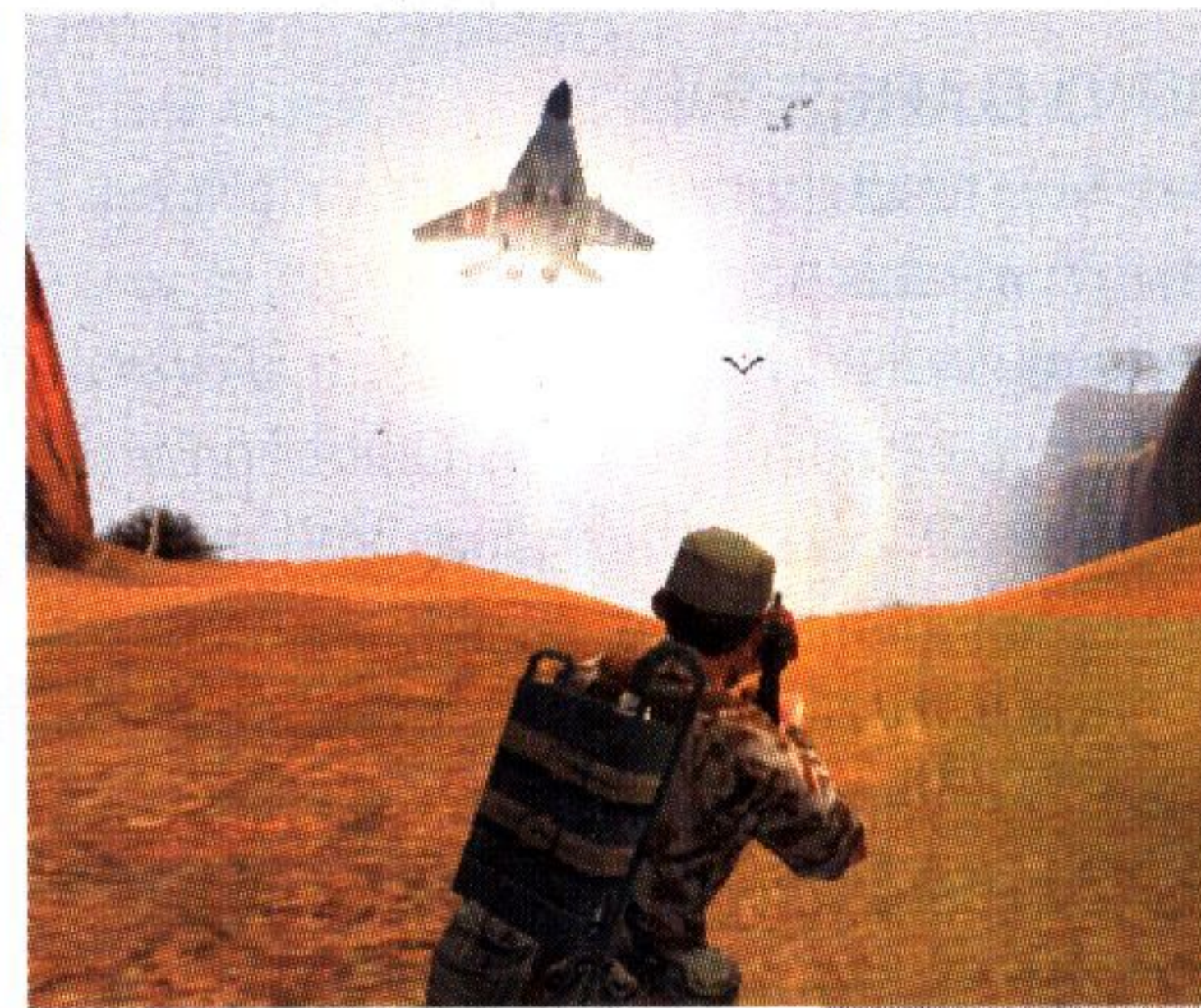
No shooting game is complete without explosions.



Pivotal hopes the third-person perspective gameplay will attract plenty of gamers.



Desert Storm's real-life setting will give it a sense of authenticity.



## "As with most PC games it offers a more sanitised version of history based loosely on actual operations"

were courting execution for desertion. Shocking figures indeed, but no more impressive than your typical PC game. *Serious Sam* can take out 100,000 screaming headless zombies in the time it takes George Bush Sr to call his boy and say: "You go get 'em, son."

### HOT POTATO

Of course, the main reason we haven't had a Gulf War action game until now is because it was and still remains a contentious war, one that whether it was necessary or not, certainly gave *EastEnders* a battle in the ratings war. Still, wars are soon forgotten, and when *Conflict: Desert Storm* was conceived (the game, not the TV show), the world's peacekeeping armies had moved through

Somalia, the Balkans and East Timor. The time seemed right. Then came September 11, Operation Enduring Freedom, and George Bush's thinly veiled desire to finish what his father had started in Iraq.

Consequently, *Conflict: Desert Storm* has become something of an interactive hot potato. Publisher SCI is of course no stranger to controversy after three *Carmageddon* titles, although they're at pains to express the game has "nothing to do whatsoever with September 11 or the war in Afghanistan".

### FRIENDLY FIRE

The game we are concerned with today is far less controversial than you might imagine, considering current events. As with most PC games it offers a more sanitised version of history based loosely on actual operations. Those of you expecting the Cold War realism of *Operation Flashpoint* may be a little disappointed. *Desert Storm* is an action game through and through, one that measures health out of a hundred, where you play the good guys, kill the bad guys and get to run across lots of sand. Burning oil fields, friendly fire, Gulf War Syndrome and NBC suits are all off the menu.

"It's a game not a simulation," says Jim Bamba, MD of Pivotal Games. "We've drawn extensively on events in the Gulf War, but we're not creating a soldier sim. Instead, we've gone for a fun-based



## Q&A

### JIM BAMBRA



Smashing ex-Pumpkin, Head Of Design at Microprose and now MD of Pivotal Games, Jim Bamba, talks about the warzone that is games development.

**PCZ** *Warzone 2100* was a PCZ Classic, the first 3D RTS to get such an award. Despite the critical acclaim it bombed – why was that?

**JB** *Warzone 2100*, while being a brilliant game didn't achieve the level of sales that we'd hope for. As to why? Who really knows? It certainly more than paid for itself and still has an active online community today. For us, it established our reputation as developers of an excellent game.

**PCZ** Out of Pumpkin Studios, Pivotal Games arose. Why the change?

**JB** Pivotal Games was founded following our departure from Eidos in March 2000. Up until then we were a fully-owned Eidos studio. Following the break with Eidos, it was time to establish a new name for the studio. In many ways Pivotal Games is a continuation of Pumpkin Studios. All of the original founder members were with us at Pumpkin. We decided that the best way forward was to move the studio to new premises and get on with developing our next product.

**PCZ** How has development gone on *Conflict: Desert Storm*? Anything that you wanted to add to the game but couldn't?

**JB** We're very pleased with the way the development has gone. There are always lots of ideas for new features and missions that we could add. Watch out for where we go next to see what these are.



**"In what is something of a first, *Desert Storm* allows you to play either as Delta Force or the SAS"**



Infiltrating enemy lines will mean stealth and tactics are of the essence.

game that allows you to take a few hits before being knocked out."

Certainly the PC could do with some light relief. Action games with a contemporary setting have exclusively been aimed more towards the hardcore, while the more arcade-like *Delta Force* series hasn't delivered all it could have done. I for one am relieved, although since we saw more of Kate Adie than anyone else on the battlefield, it will be strange reliving the conflict without reporters bringing up the rear.

"Actually, during the Kuwait City mission a news helicopter buzzes you," says Jim. "You can see the cameraman filming you as you fight your way across the highway. Later, at the end of the game, the media are interviewing one of the characters you've rescued earlier on in the game."

Sure enough, as I played through beta code a couple of days later, a helicopter

flew over my squad. Needless to say they never filed their next report. You can't have nosy media types exposing the cream of Britain's fighting few, after all.

#### WHO DARES WINS

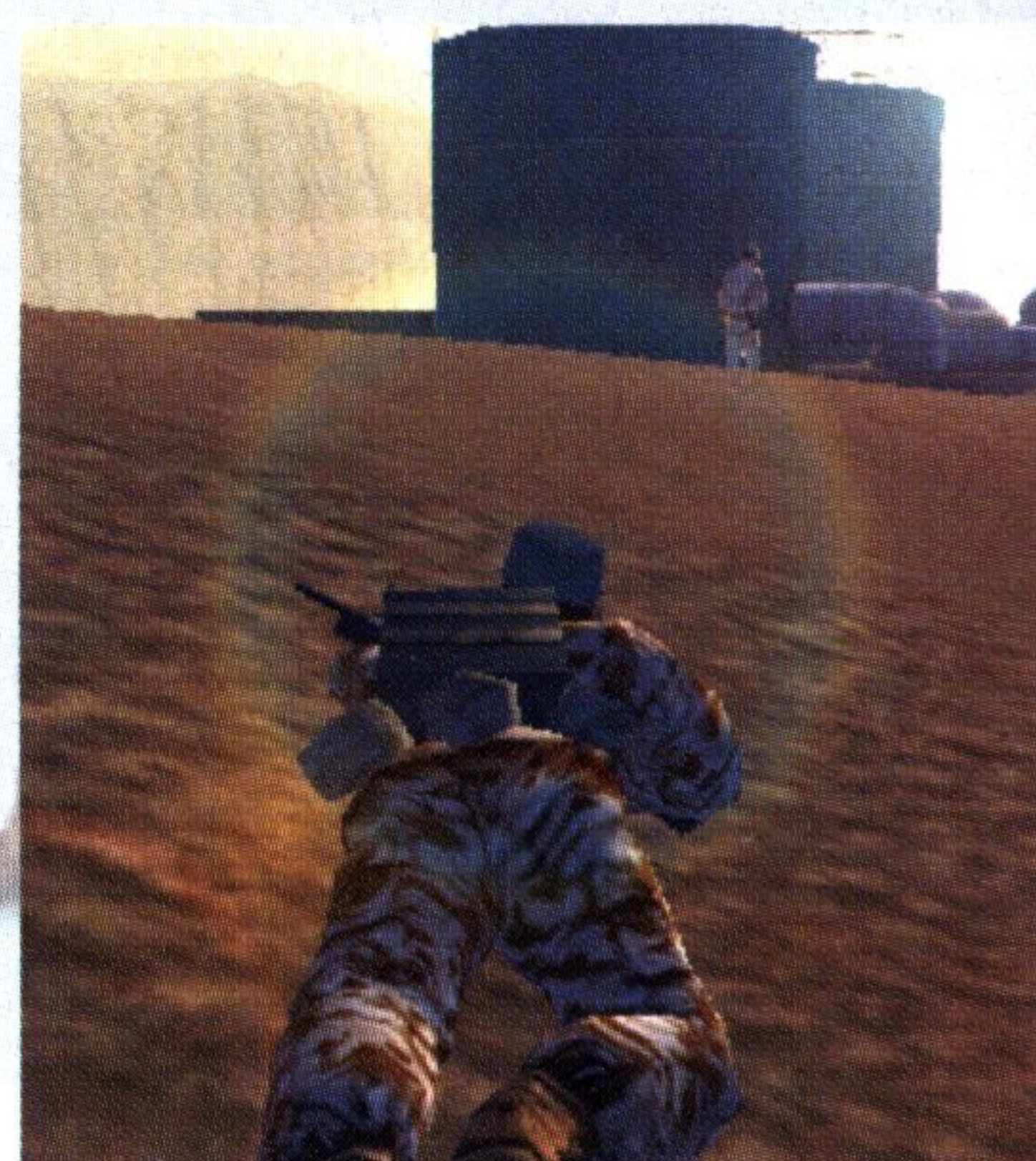
Yes, you read that right; Britain's fighting few. In what is something of a first, certainly in living memory, *Desert Storm* allows you to play either as Delta Force or the SAS. Of course the game isn't much different whichever nationality you choose to control, but having led hundreds of virtual American soldiers to their doom, it makes a refreshing change to be able to do the same to your own countrymen.

"The most obvious difference is the character uniforms and voices," adds Jim, "but each set of characters has different levels of specialist skills. All the SAS guys have one skill level as a medic, while only one of the *Delta Force* characters has medic skill, but he starts at level 3."

It would be interesting to see how Delta Force and the SAS would square up to each other in the game, but in reality, the way the skills have been handed out to the troops is pretty realistic. For example the SAS are very adept at everything; each soldier is familiar with most weapons and can patch up a wounded colleague. US special forces on the other hand are much more specialised to the point where a medic wouldn't only be able to perform minor surgery, he could offer counselling as well.

"We've used Cameron Spence as our military adviser," adds Jim. "Cameron is the author of *Sabre Squadron* and an ex-SAS trooper who fought behind enemy lines in the Gulf War. It's been great having him on the team as he has first-hand knowledge of the weapons, tactics, and the environment in which the game is based."

Well that's alright then.



"They'll never see me down here."



Go, go, go...

Iraq to take out a high-ranking Iraqi general in his heavily guarded fortress."

To help you in your mission of course are the members of your highly-trained squad. Up to four soldiers will be in action at any one time and like *Red Storm*'s recent *Ghost Recon*, switching between your troops and issuing commands on the fly is a thankfully simple affair.

"The order system is very elegant," says Jim. "It's all done in the game world with no recourse to planning maps or complex in-game editors. You can tell the other men to follow you, go to any position you

#### REALITY CHECK LITE



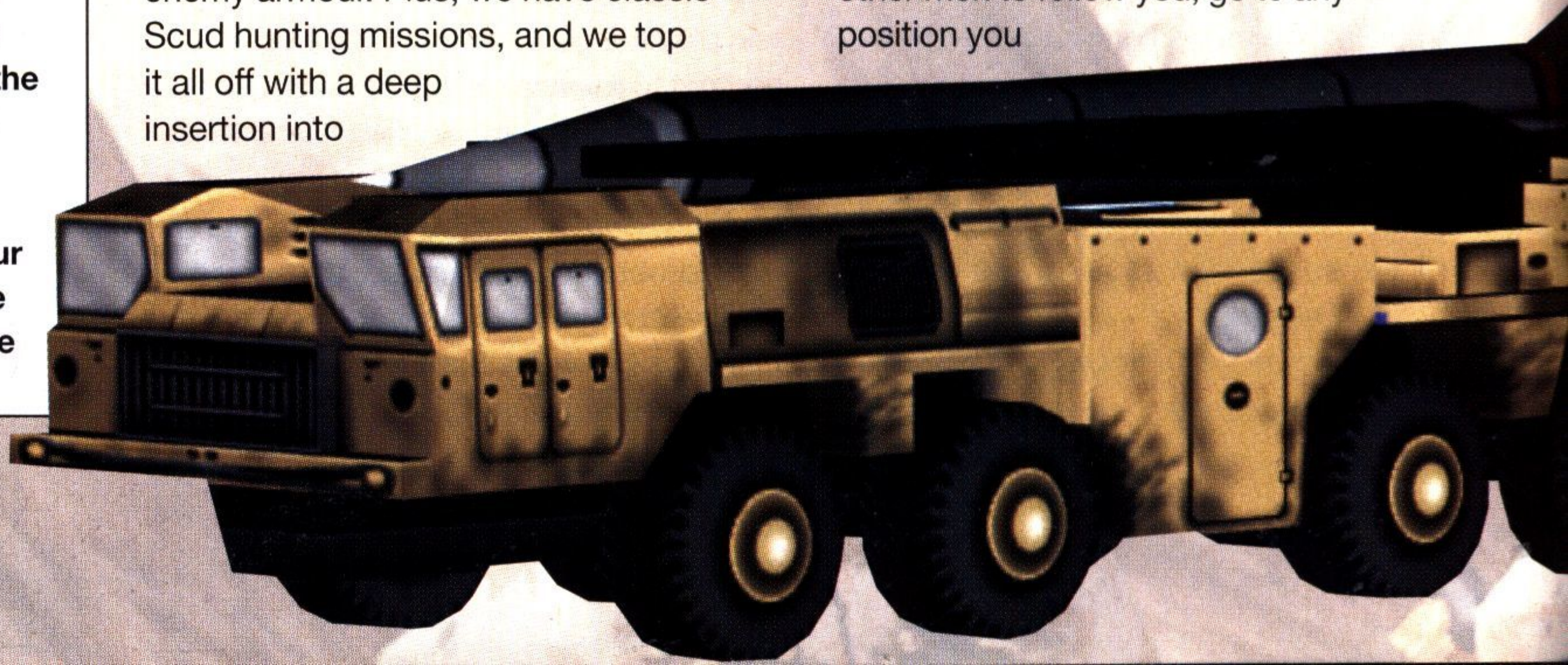
#### HOW REAL IS CONFLICT DESERT STORM?

Just how real is *Conflict: Desert Storm* compared to the real war in the desert? Well it's certainly the case that we'd rather play *Desert Storm* than have been in *Desert Storm*. While in the game you have to worry about being shot in the face by an Iraqi bullet, in reality, as a Brit, you had a greater chance of being shot in the back by an American one. Then of course there was the extreme heat, the dust and lack of water. The only extremes you face in front of a PC are tiredness, obesity and incontinence. Just be glad *Conflict: Desert Storm* is a game. If you want the real experience, put on a gimp suit, turn up the central heating, set your PC in front of a treadmill and gaffer tape mobile phones to your ears to simulate the effect of being in constant contact with depleted uranium. If you don't expire with ten minutes, you surely will within ten years.

#### STORM TROOPERS

Setting the game behind enemy lines makes a lot of sense, especially since the actual ground war in the desert only lasted a couple of days. By the time the tanks rolled across the Saudi border, the job of the special forces was all but done. For them the conflict lasted for weeks rather than hours and was rather more taxing than taking thousands of prisoners.

"The mission objectives are varied," says Jim. "From blowing up bridges, rescuing prisoners of war from Baghdad, escorting the Emir of Kuwait to safety, all the way up to full-blown military attacks on enemy positions. In 'Cavalry Charge' you have to take out mobile anti-aircraft defences and then call in the A10 Tankbusters to take out the emplaced enemy armour. Plus, we have classic Scud hunting missions, and we top it all off with a deep insertion into





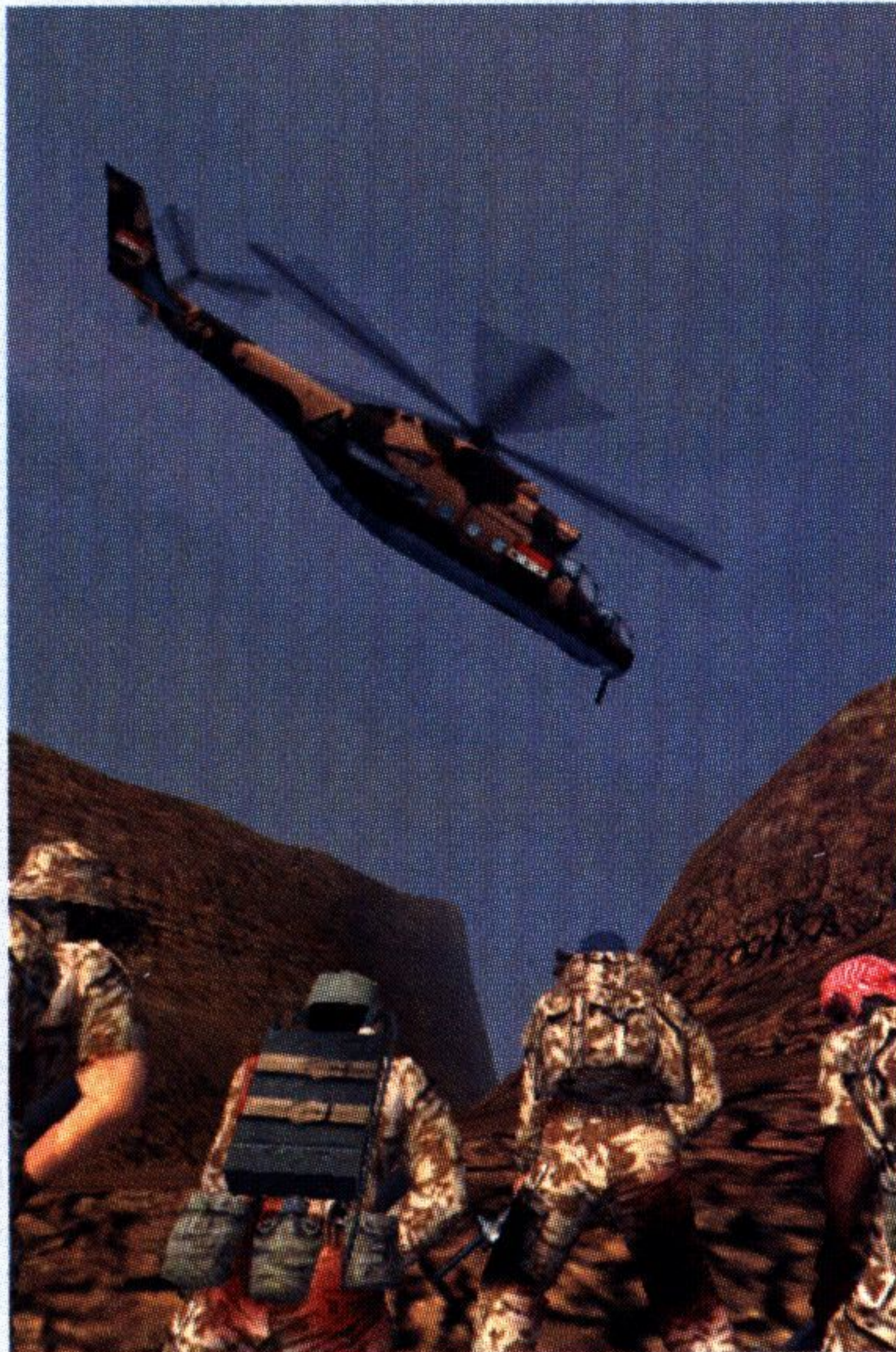
can see in the game world, get them to crouch, crawl, fire at will or set up ambushes."

"Each character complements the others," he adds. "Success depends on using the characters as a team with the sniper and heavy weapons guys being used to cover the others as they advance. Once the front guys are in position, the heavy weapons and sniper guy can be quickly called up or moved into new positions using the order system."

#### A REAL HUMMER

It wouldn't be much of a game without an array of real-world weaponry, most of which we're all well acquainted with through *Counter-Strike* and other games and mods; M16 with M203 grenade launcher, Barrett Light 50, M60, AK-47, MP5 – the lot. Moreover there are mines, grenades, mounted machine guns, Stinger missiles and the option to call in artillery or air strikes. Best of all your specialists can hop into Humvees and M2 APCs and drive around. Of course the Iraqis have hardware of their own, so racing through the desert isn't something you do too often.

While the version of the game we played had very impressive team AI, that of the enemy was rather static. They



The enemy won't be a pushover, as they'll have plenty of hi-tech weaponry to shoot at you with.

throw grenades, run from yours and even try to outflank you, but finding cover seems something of a problem. Of course we have a few months to go until release, by which time we will have played the multiplayer side of things (you can join up as Russian Spetsnaz or Iraqi Republican



**"The fact that *Desert Storm* has a very real setting will be a very big draw"**

Guard). Maybe Pivotal will even sneak in a Saddam Vs Bush minigame. Controversial certainly, but it would be fun.

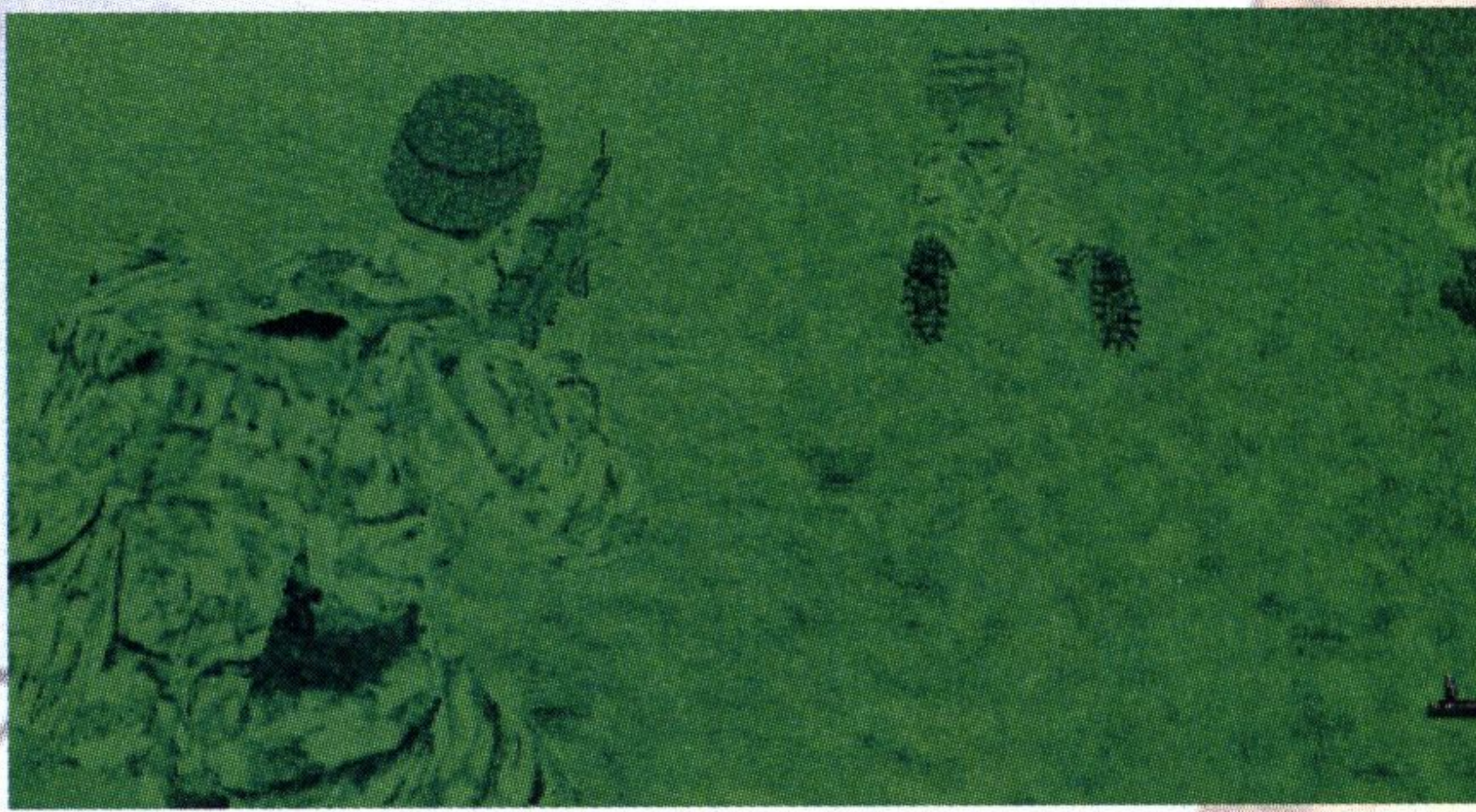
#### DESERT SIEGE

While there is a place for a game like *Desert Storm*, its biggest problem is its release so soon after the *Ghost Recon* add-on *Desert Siege*. Despite being set in near-future East Africa, *Desert Siege* is a fantastic expansion to a great game. *Desert Storm* itself shares many similarities with *Ghost Recon*; the four-man squad, the environment and the real-time tactics. *Desert Storm* certainly has its

work cut out and worryingly Pivotal doesn't seem to have played it. Leaving aside *Ghost Recon*, there are many other realistic shooters out there or on the way – *Counter-Strike: Condition Zero* and *Raven Shield* are two that spring to mind – prompting us to fear that *Desert Storm* may be a game too far.

"If shooters don't evolve, then yes, PC gamers will get sick of them," says Jim. "But *Conflict: Desert Storm* is primarily a third-person game, not a first-person shooter. This makes it play very differently from other FPSs. It's also very tactical with each of the characters performing a different role, and to succeed, you have to use the characters as a team. With *Conflict: Desert Storm* we're offering something very different."

Whether it'll be different enough, we'll have to wait and see. One thing's for sure, with so many realistic team-based games setting themselves in fictional conflicts, the fact that *Desert Storm* has a very real setting will be a big draw. For me, until we get to go over the top and across the bog of the Somme, the desert will do just fine. **PCZ**



Let the bodies hit the floor, let the bodies hot the floor...



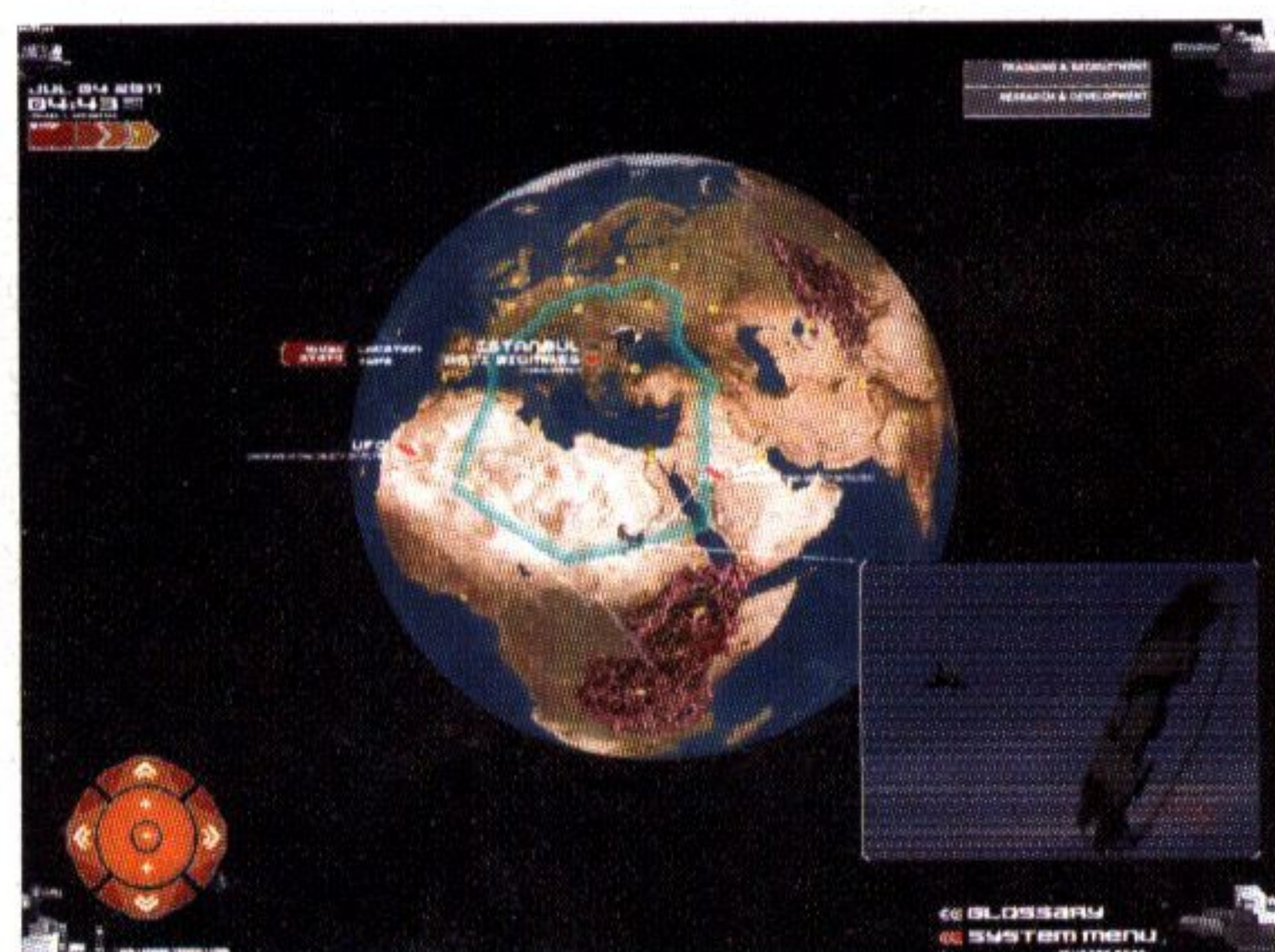




Yes, this looks reassuringly familiar...

**"Characters have no volition of their own; they will not do anything they are not explicitly told to do"**

**JIRI RYDL**  
ALTAR INTERACTIVE



The new all-singing, all-dancing Geoscape: plan your missions here.

#### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Virgin Interactive  
**PUBLISHER** Altar Interactive  
**WEBSITE** [www.ufo-aftermath.com](http://www.ufo-aftermath.com)  
**OUT** 4th Quarter 2002

#### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Like... duh... it's X-Com
- Fully 3D environment for the first time
- The 'true' spiritual successor to the original series



That'll be an alien then. An early sketch of one of the new enemies.



Tactical combat is basically turn-based, but the action is played out in real-time.



A new 3D camera will help you spot those sneaky aliens lurking round the corner.

## Zooming ahead

# UFO: AFTERMATH

**UFO goes back to its roots for the first time since *X-Com: Apocalypse*. Chris Anderson investigates the rebirth of a legend**

**IF YOU DON'T** know why just about everyone in the strategy community is feverishly excited at the prospect of a *UFO* remake, check out our Games That Changed The World feature in issue 115 for a full run-down on everything that made the game special, including some fascinating insights from the Gollop brothers (creators of the original game).

The new title, formerly known as *Dreamland Chronicles*, and previously in the hands of the Gollop brothers, is now being developed by Czech outfit Altar Interactive, apparently with the assistance of Julian Gollop (which is a good sign). While *Aftermath* is going back to the original *UFO* strategic combination of global exploration, resource management, and tactical ground-based combat, there is one very noticeable change, and yes you've guessed it, every aspect of the

game will now be in full 3D. The good news here is this will open up a whole new array of tactical options, with the ability to zoom and rotate the landscape as you see fit in order to see your targets more clearly, although the combat system itself will be a somewhat familiar one...

#### IF IT AIN'T BROKE

The tactical combat sections are to be given a huge overhaul graphically (as you would expect), though interestingly the pseudo turn-based system used in *X-Com: Apocalypse* will be making a return. Jiri Rydl, Altar Interactive's inhouse press guru explains why: "We use a turn-based system with simultaneous turns and planning, which in our opinion successfully combines the good things of both turn-based and real-time systems. As in turn-based games, you can

completely control your characters. They have no volition of their own; they will not do anything they are not explicitly told to do. As in RTS, you get visually interesting action and more believable situations – you have a living, dramatic scene. Moreover, you never have to wait during the enemy's turn."

It's a system that worked well for *Apocalypse*, and we dare say it will work well for *Aftermath* too. We'll hopefully be bringing you a more in-depth look at the game in a future issue when the boys and girls at Altar Interactive are ready to unveil their project in all its glory. In the meantime, just looking at the screenshots here is enough to make us want to blow the dust off our old copies of *X-Com* and give them another whirl. For true *X-Com* veterans, *Aftermath* simply can't come quickly enough. **EW**



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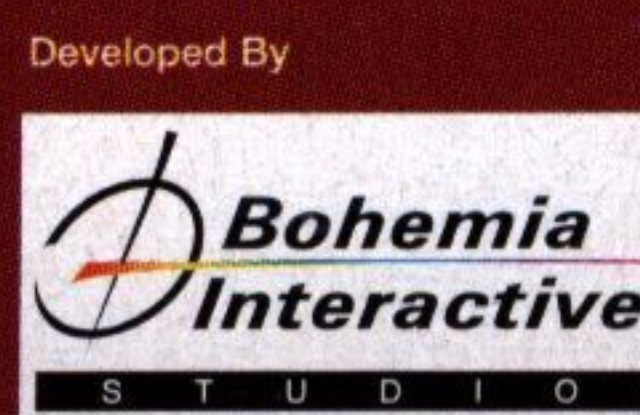
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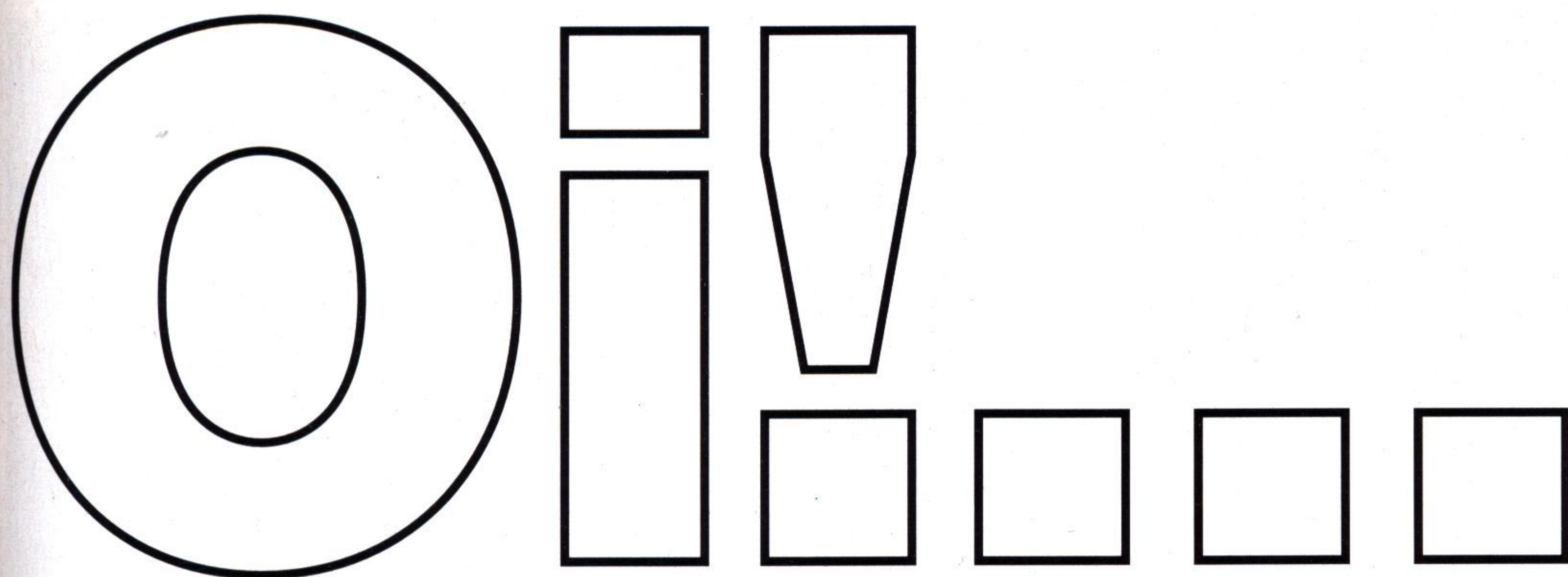
GENIUS AT PLAY™



## PROFILE

WARREN  
SPECTOR**DEVELOPER:** Ion Storm**POSITION:** Studio director**FAVOURITE GAME:** *Zelda: A Link To The Past* on the SNES**FIRST GAME YOU EVER PLAYED:***A Star Trek* sim on a newspaper's mainframe

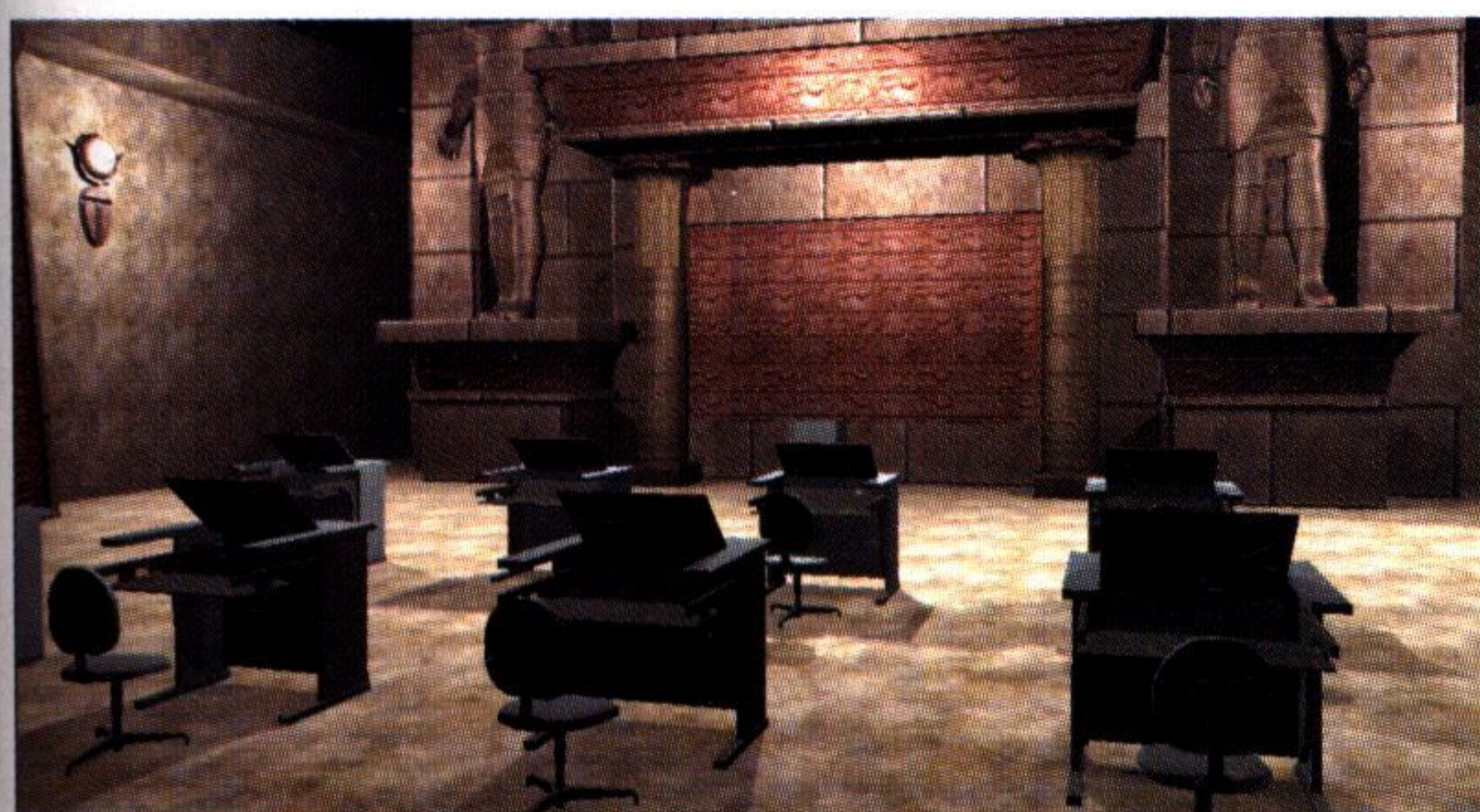




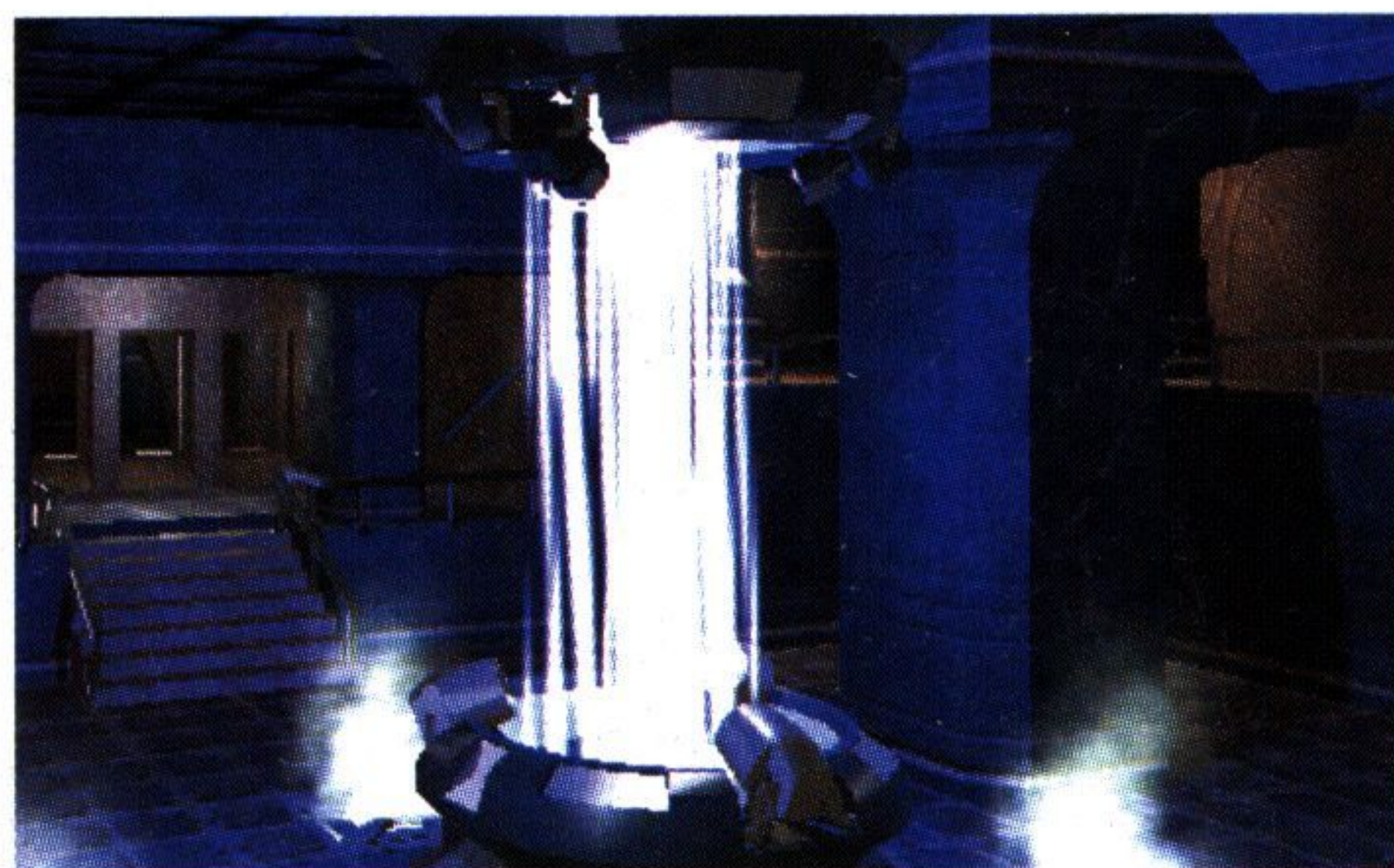
**SPECTOR, what's your game?**

# DEUS EX 2: INVISIBLE WAR

**He's emerged as one of the true visionaries of modern gaming and is helping to shape the future of interactive entertainment. Mark Hill talks to one of his heroes about *that* sequel**



The latest build is still a bit empty...



...but the new engine is looking stunning and the odd characters that are dotted about are beautiful.



## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Ion Storm  
**PUBLISHER** Eidos  
**WEBSITE** [www.deusex2.com](http://www.deusex2.com)  
**OUT** June 2003

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- The sequel to the best game ever
- Even more freedom, more interactivity and more atmosphere
- State-of-the-art graphics

**CV**



## WARREN SPECTOR

He worked for Steve Jackson's boardgame company and *Dungeon & Dragon* creators TSR before joining developers Origin in 1989. Here are some of his career highlights so far.

- 1992** *Ultima Underworld*  
 One of the most influential role-playing games ever and the first to really immerse the player in a 3D first-person environment.
- 1994** *System Shock*  
 Another landmark in computer gaming, this sci-fi RPG was years ahead of its time and spawned an equally excellent sequel.
- 1998** *Thief: The Dark Project*  
 He was only a collaborator but the influence of the first real first-person stealth game can be felt on *Deus Ex*. He's now supervising the second sequel.
- 2000** *Deus Ex*  
 You've probably heard of this one...

**WARREN** Spector is a very busy man. Not only is he supervising the sequel to my all-time favourite game, he's also directing operations on the highly anticipated *Thief III*. We talked to him and to *Deus Ex 2* project lead Harvey Smith about the game's development, their hopes and the problems that such a highly ambitious and innovative title generates.

**PCZ** What sort of issues have you come across in trying to create the game in a way that you can complete it without ever shedding blood? Was it primarily an AI issue that prevented you from doing this in the first game or just general game design?

**WARREN** It wasn't impossible to get through *Deus Ex* without killing but there were several problems, one of which is critical – specifically, technology dictates gameplay to a greater extent than you might think. Our underlying technology (and, yes, AI) was conceived with shooters in mind, leading to a game where combat is, if never the only option, often the easiest.

**HARVEY** In *Deus Ex 2* we've put a lot of thought into providing non-lethal options. But stealth (avoidance, non-detection) also plays heavily into the experience. Then there's the possibility of talking your way out of some situations. The difficulty here is avoiding the

phenomenon of simply asking the player to guess at the correct branching path conversation option.

**PCZ** Will your moral choices affect the storyline and the way characters react to you?

**WARREN** We did a pretty good job of that in *Deus Ex* but we all knew (with the benefit of 20-20 hindsight) that we could have done better. I think you'll see a much more reactive world, not just in terms of physical simulation but in characters who lead richer (virtual) emotional lives. Yes, you can expect moral choices to affect the way the world reacts to you.

**PCZ** Will there be more adventure elements for those who don't want to play the game shooting everything?

**HARVEY** We want to allow the player the option of never touching a gun, if that's what he or she wants. But just because the player attempts to play non-violently doesn't mean the AI will. We're putting a lot of effort into *Deus Ex 2*'s story, character and exploration so the experience should be intriguing even if the player never picks up a weapon... maybe more so, in fact.

**PCZ** You seem to be aiming to turn *Deus Ex 2* into one of the best-looking games ever. How important are graphics for what you're trying to achieve?

**WARREN** We are certainly pushing harder on the graphics front than we did on *Deus Ex* – or on many of the games I've been associated with over the years. The key for us is to use technology and graphics to enhance gameplay rather than just as eye candy.

**PCZ** How have you overcome the hurdle of continuing the story when you offered players a choice of three endings in the first game?

**HARVEY** We're not really talking about where we're picking up. We're doing something that I find really interesting. All I can say is that *Deus Ex 2* follows the events of the first game, 15 years later.

**PCZ** How do you feel about game sequels in general? Do you feel they're more justified than, say, film sequels, or is there still a big element of cashing-in on a previous success?

**WARREN** In general, I think there are too many sequels in all media these days. Just look at the list of movies coming out this summer – it's appalling. But you have to remember how expensive games are to produce, how much competition there is for player dollars and how many games – sequel or not – sink like stones and lose a ton of money. If you have something that can help you stand out from the crowd and minimise risk you'd be crazy not to take advantage





Though some way off, Spector does see a multiplayer *Deus Ex* in the future.



of it. The real problem isn't sequels, I think. The problem is sequels that don't bring anything new to the table. That's one of the big reasons Harvey Smith is directing *Deus Ex 2* rather than me. With someone new at the helm you can count on new ideas and new approaches.

**PCZ** What's the thinking behind allowing the player to play as a female character? This has usually been just an aesthetic option in console games like *Resident Evil*, but I'm guessing it will have a massive impact on the gameplay of *Deus Ex 2*, right?

**WARREN** Yeah, if the idea in a *Deus Ex* game is to make critical character choices that have real impact – character choices that can be expressed minute-to-minute in gameplay – what could possibly be more important than your choice of gender? We have to do this...

**PCZ** How is the working relationship between the *Thief III* and *Deus Ex 2* teams affecting the development process?

**WARREN** Having two teams making games that are, at least, superficially similar, and sharing much of the codebase, has been mostly a positive experience, with just a hint of frustration thrown in to keep things interesting. Both teams challenge each other constantly. We have semi-regular designer "conferences" here that are

extraordinary. When the two teams get together, the creativity level skyrockets and both games benefit.

**PCZ** How has the augmentation and character development changed this time round?

**HARVEY** Most of the same powers will be available. The world has figured out more about nanotechnology. Powers like the ones from the first game are now referred to by those in the know as Biomod Implants. A black market has sprung up. I can't say more, but – along with all the standard biomods – I think the blackmarket powers are going to be very popular.

**PCZ** The freedom offered in *Deus Ex* was one of the most significant advances games have seen in decades. How will you improve on that freedom and what sort of design problems does that pose?

**WARREN** Much of the freedom players experienced in the first game was a result of very clever preplanning on the part of extremely creative designers. In *Deus Ex 2*, the game systems and the world simulation are being designed together, from scratch, to provide players with expressive tools and to do it in such a way that the designers don't have to preplan as much. If we can pull that off, *Deus Ex 2* will be a big step forward from the first game.



The new art installation at the Tate Modern attracted record crowds.

**"Just because the player attempts to play non-violently doesn't mean the AI will"**



**PCZ** You seem to really be making a stand for single-player only games. Do you think gamers will ever get it into their thick skulls that not all games need multiplayer options? After all, they don't expect something like *EverQuest* to have a single-player mode.

**WARREN** *Deus Ex* would never have worked if gamers had "thick skulls" or we had believed they did (although some developers do assume they're smarter than players). I'm convinced that multiplayer is a bullet point marketing guys need on the back of a box far more than it is something players really need or even want. There's so much we still need to do in the single-player space, so much more we can offer players. There's no either/or, multi/single dichotomy here, at least not in my mind.

**PCZ** Can you envision a MMORPG version of *Deus Ex* sometime in the future, or would you like to concentrate on creating single-player experiences?

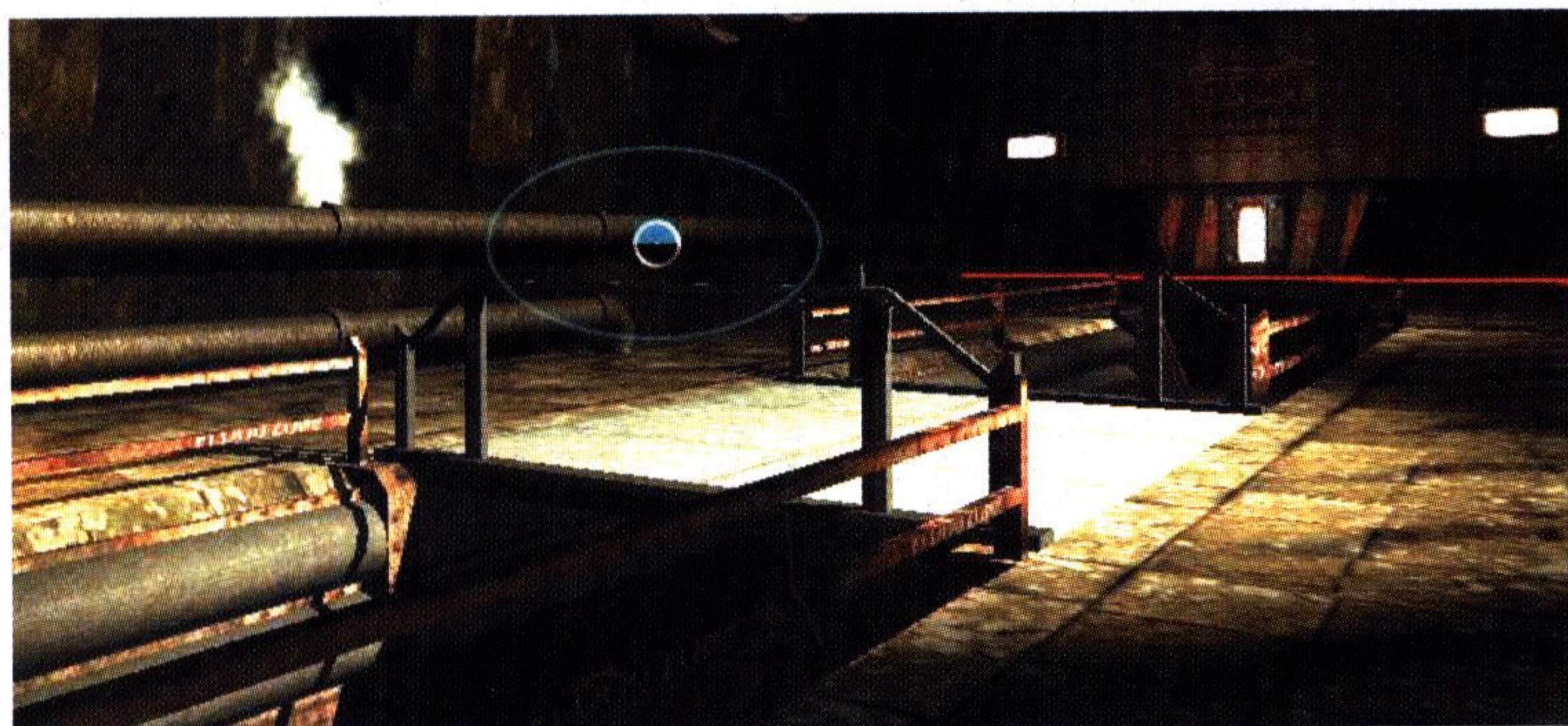
**WARREN** It's funny, but (my single-player leanings notwithstanding) much of the *Deus Ex* design and design philosophy

grew out of the experience of working on a design for a multiplayer game. When I was with Looking Glass, my office worked on a thing called *Junction Point*, a massively multiplayer, online-only game that was never funded. If you look at that design doc (which I'd still like to implement someday), you'll see a lot of *Deus Ex*. So, yeah, I can totally envision a massively multiplayer version of *Deus Ex*. It's already half designed.

**PCZ** You've said before that you feel you get too much credit for being the sole creator of the first game. To a certain extent films are also massively collaborative efforts, but do you see yourself as something akin to a director who provides the overall vision?

**WARREN** There certainly is an analogy in gaming to the director role on a movie. But, for all the similarities between film production and game development, I'd have to say that making a game is far more collaborative than anything else I'm familiar with. And while there may be some people out there who rule their projects with an iron fist and who make every decision, no matter how trivial, no one could ever accuse me of being that sort of person. The advantages of distributing the creative load are just too great. Most notably, players get the benefit of an entire team's collective strengths and a greater breadth of ideas than any one person could ever provide, no matter how clever or creative.

I mean, what would *Deus Ex* have been without Harvey Smith's contributions to the design of the game systems? What would the *Deus Ex* plot have been without the incredible Hong Kong missions conceived and crafted by Steve Powers? What would the game have been without AI Yarusso's conversation system or Sheldon Pacotti's stunning use of that system? And how about all the unscripted behaviours of Scott Martin's AI or the audio of Alex Brandon? The list of critical creative contributors goes on and on. Each of the team members brings something special and unique to the creative table. The director just makes sure all that creativity is being channelled in a single direction. **EW**



Not much on the story yet, but we bet there's a conspiracy theme somewhere.



FROM THE CREATORS OF BALDUR'S GATE™

FORGOTTEN REALMS

# Neverwinter Nights™



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DEVELOPED BY  
**BIOWARE**  
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ATARI

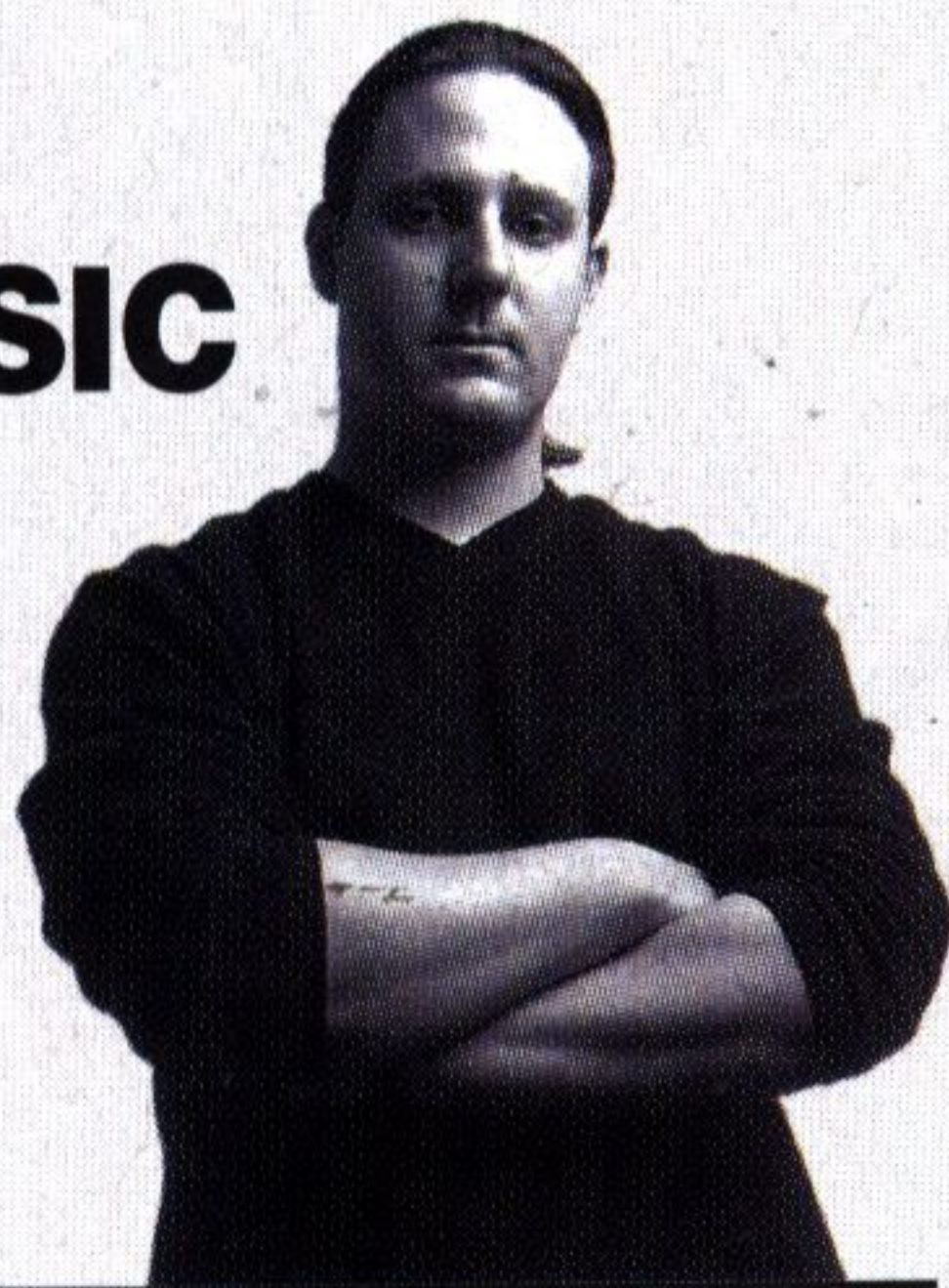
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# REVIEWS

## IT'S A CLASSIC



■ **REVIEWS EDITOR** Martin Korda

▲ With the England v Argentina game having finished little over an hour ago, you may be asking yourself why I'm not out on the lash celebrating, baring my arse laddishly atop of a creaking table and showering myself with strong continental lager? Simple. What with E3 (which if you've read our *PC ZONE* E3 Awards feature, you'll know was bloody good), a much needed holiday and the Queen's Jubilee, I staggered back to the office with just three days to spare before deadline to find a mound of work larger than most of the lardy boys I saw over in the States (men so large that one loss of balance could see entire cities wiped out) waiting for me. That'll teach me to enjoy myself. However, I'm pleased to see that just like last month, we've not one, but two *PC ZONE* Classics in the issue.

Now I know what you're thinking. We're getting soft on reviews right? Starting to ease off on the scathing criticism a bit, and be more generous with our scoring? Well actually, no. We've been as shocked as anyone to find four Classics in two issues, given that in the past it's usually taken us about six months to rack up that many. And as PC lovers, we should all be celebrating. In fact, we should be jumping onto creaking tables, bearing our arses laddishly and showering ourselves with strong continental lager.

It's all well and good looking forward to the likes of *Doom III* and *Unreal II*, which blew us away at E3, but we need great games right here and now and not just in the distant future. Thankfully, over the last couple of months we've been getting them. Turn to pages 58 and 64 to check out this month's Classics and get celebrating. Mine's a pint of Stella.



Bioware's long-awaited RPG epic is finally here. Find out our thoughts on page 58.



Only games that score 90 per cent or more receive the coveted Classic award. The best of the best.



The second tier award for games scoring between 80 and 89 per cent. Essential purchases.

### THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM

Some people (mainly game publishers) say that our scoring system is harsh. It's not. It's honest and built around the seemingly outdated idea that 50 per cent is an average score. Likewise, 70 per cent is a good score, anything above 80 per cent is excellent, and 90 per cent and above is a Classic. Talking of Classic awards, don't expect to see one every issue as we don't chuck them around like confetti.

### OUR REVIEWERS

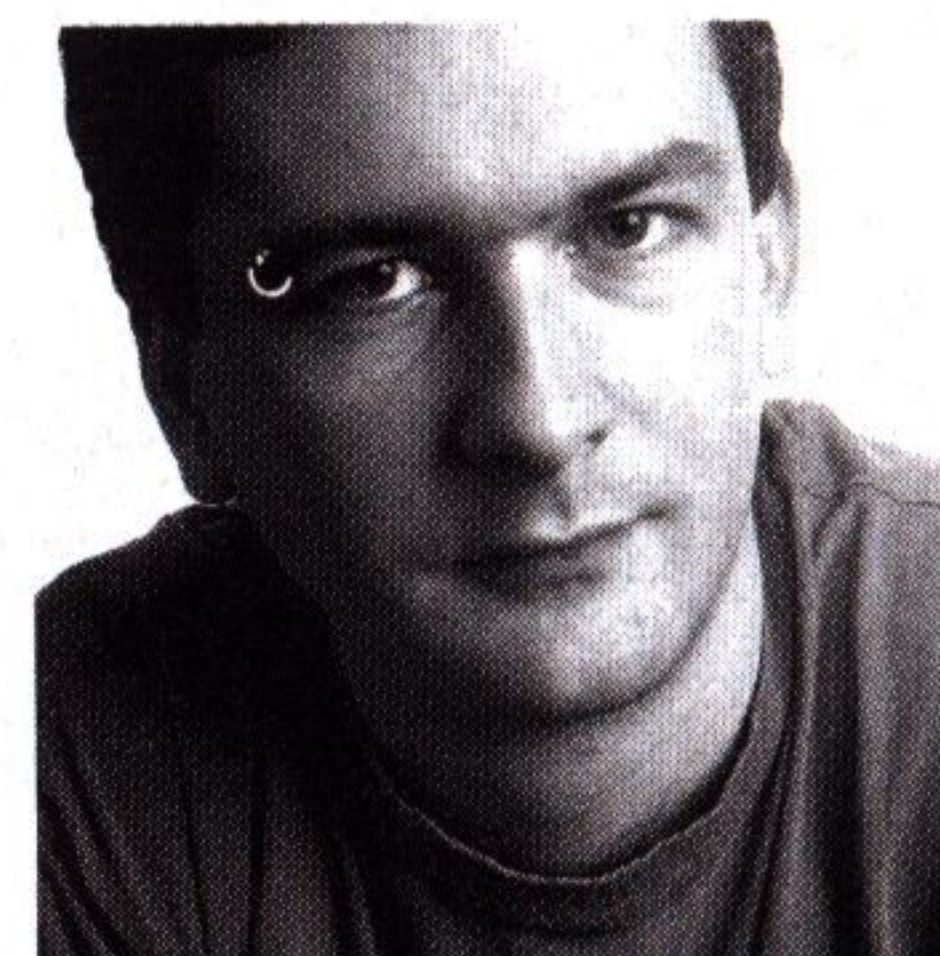
We think our reviewers are the best in the business. Each one is a specialist in numerous genres and will have played every major release so no game is judged in isolation. We also make sure the right game gets reviewed by the right person, which means that you won't see Steve Hill reviewing an RPG and we won't let Rhianna loose on *FIFA 2003*. We know that occasionally

you might disagree with us but we're big enough to take criticism. You can email your thoughts to [letters@pczone.co.uk](mailto:letters@pczone.co.uk), or get them off your chest instantly on the forums at [www.pczone.co.uk](http://www.pczone.co.uk). If you think you can do better then why not send us a review – if it's good enough we'll print it in the magazine.

### ONLINE REVIEWS AND REVIEW UPDATES

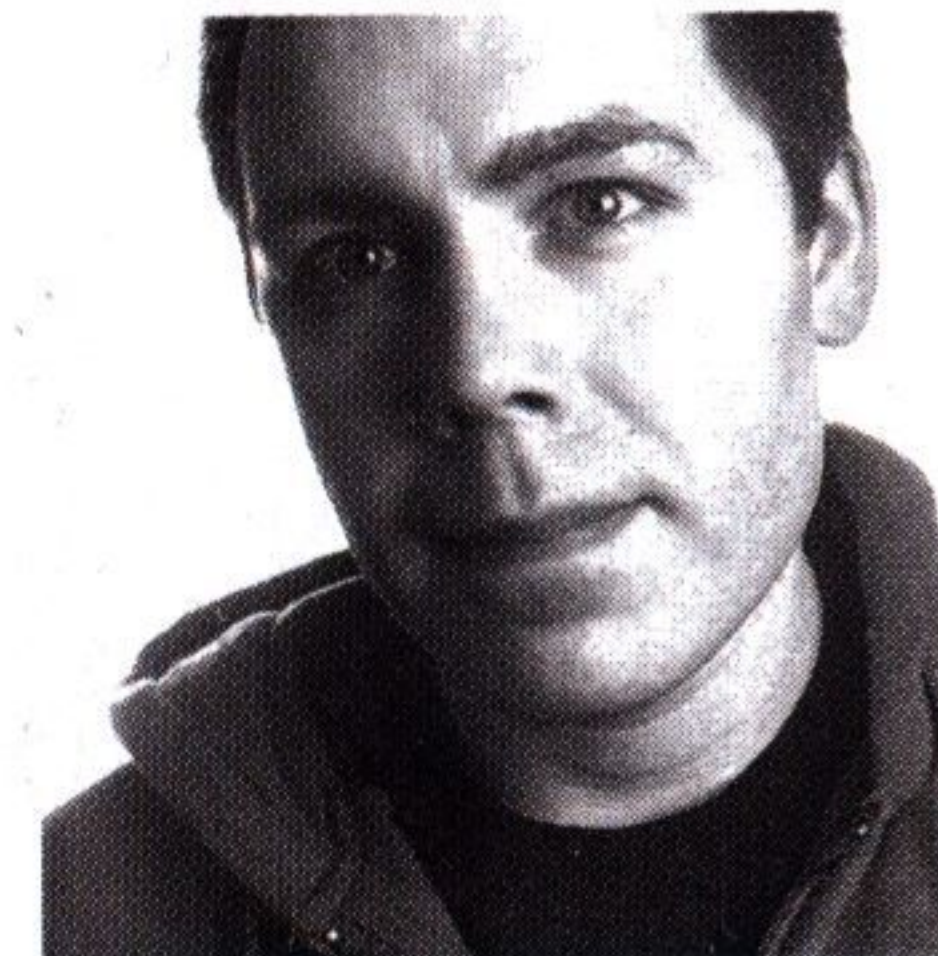
We review a lot of games before they go on sale, and if there are no public servers running before we go to print we won't second guess how the game's going to play online. Instead you'll find dedicated online reviews of all the major releases in our regular Update section. This is also the place where we take a fresh look at games we think have changed significantly – as is the case with persistent online games or through major patch releases.

## MEET THE TEAM



**DAVE WOODS**

*Grand Theft Auto III*



**RICHIE SHOEMAKER**

*The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind*

What are you currently playing?

Where are you going on your holidays this summer?

Coventry. I've been going there for 32 years and it's the best place in the world.

France. I'll be wearing my Senegal football shirt.





**58**  
**NEVERWINTER NIGHTS**  
You'll be spellbound



**86**  
**RE-RELEASES**  
Older games get a re-release



**88**  
**UPDATES**  
Patches and multiplayer reviews



**90**  
**SUPERTEST**  
Quake III mods battle it out

## DEFINITIVE REVIEWS

### 58 **NEVERWINTER NIGHTS**

BIOWARE'S EPIC RPG HAS ARRIVED

### 64 **SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II: DOUBLE HELIX**

LOCK, LOAD AND BLOW OFF SOME TERRORIST LIMBS. LITERALLY

### 68 **STAR WARS:**

**GALACTIC BATTLEFIELDS: CLONE CAMPAIGNS**

STAR WARS: EPISODE II MAKES ITS FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE PC

### 70 **THE SUM OF ALL FEARS**

SQUAD-BASED TACTICAL SHOOTER BASED ON THE TOM CLANCY BOOK AND FILM

### 72 **SUPERPOWER**

### 73 **DUKE NUKEM: MANHATTAN PROJECT**

### 75 **WIZARDRY 8**

### 76 **GORE**

### 79 **MOBILE FORCES**

### 80 **TEAM FACTOR**

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### 84 **SCHIZM: THE MYSTERIOUS JOURNEY**

### 84 **THE PARTNERS**

### 85 **NIGHTSTONE**

### 85 **NEXT GENERATION TENNIS**

### 86 **RE-RELEASES**

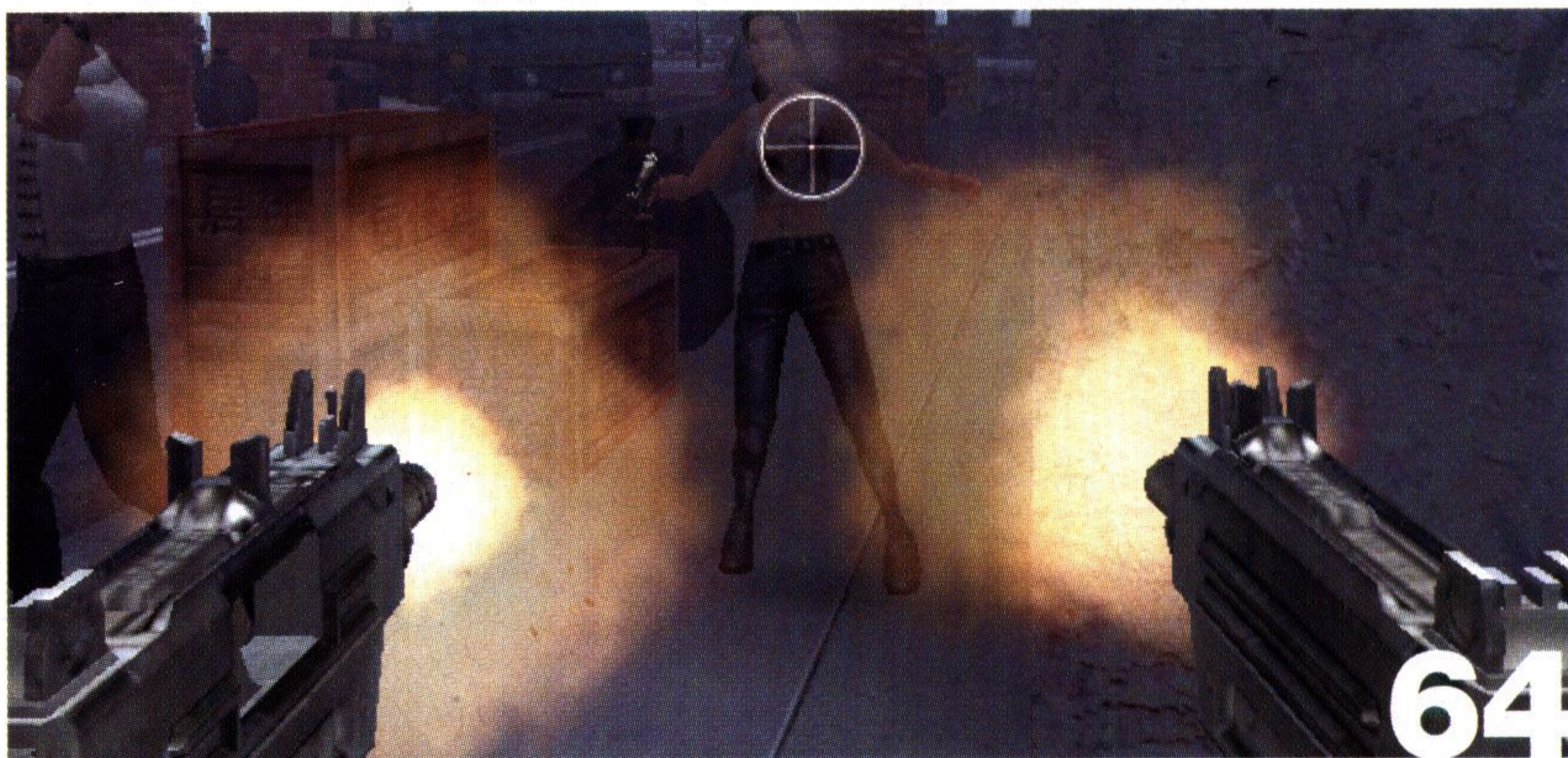
INCLUDING GHOST RECON COLLECTOR'S PACK, SEA DOGS, STARSHIP TITANIC, EDGE OF CHAOS: INDEPENDENCE WAR II, HALF-LIFE: GENERATIONS, ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON AND MORE

### 88 **UPDATES**

GLOBAL OPERATIONS MULTIPLAYER, DARK AGE OF CAMELOT V1.5 AND LASER SQUAD NEMESIS V1.08

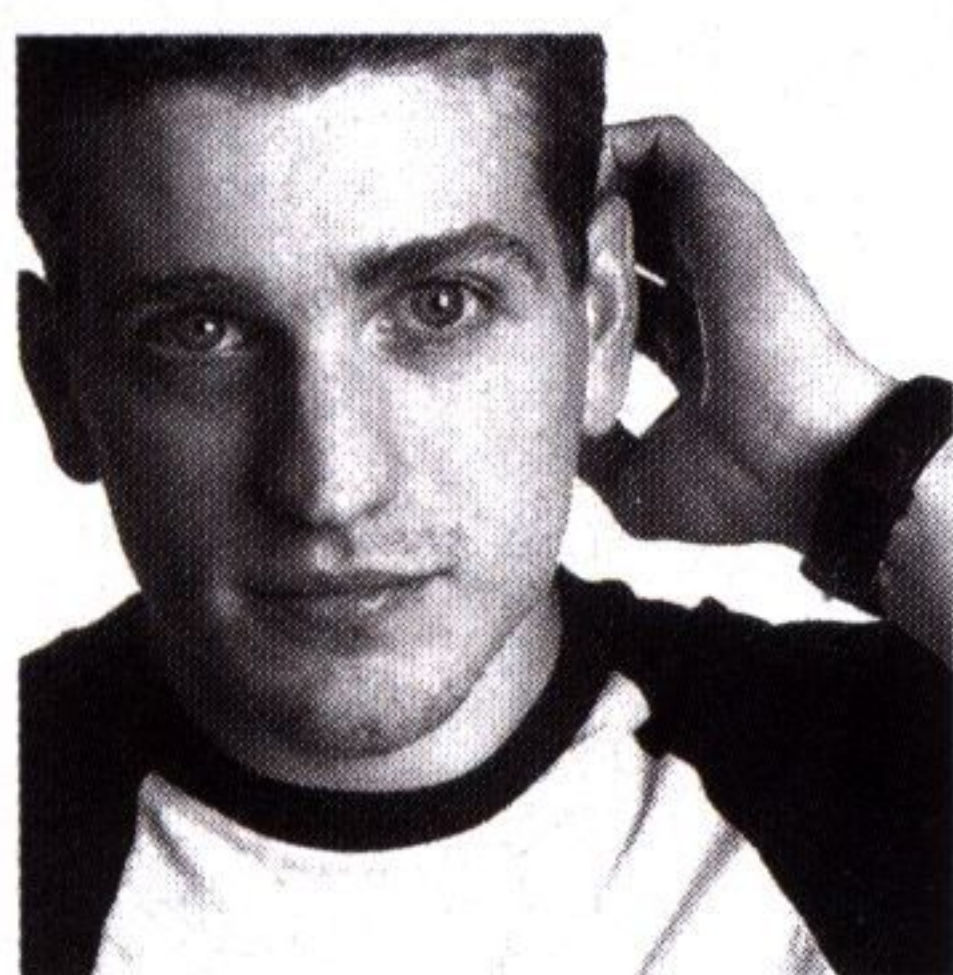
### 90 **SUPERTEST**

BATTLE OF THE QUAKE III MODS: ROCKET ARENA VS PAINKEEP VS JAILBREAK: POW VS PROBALL VS ALLIANCE. FIGHT!



**MARTIN KORDA**

Nothing, I've been on holiday.



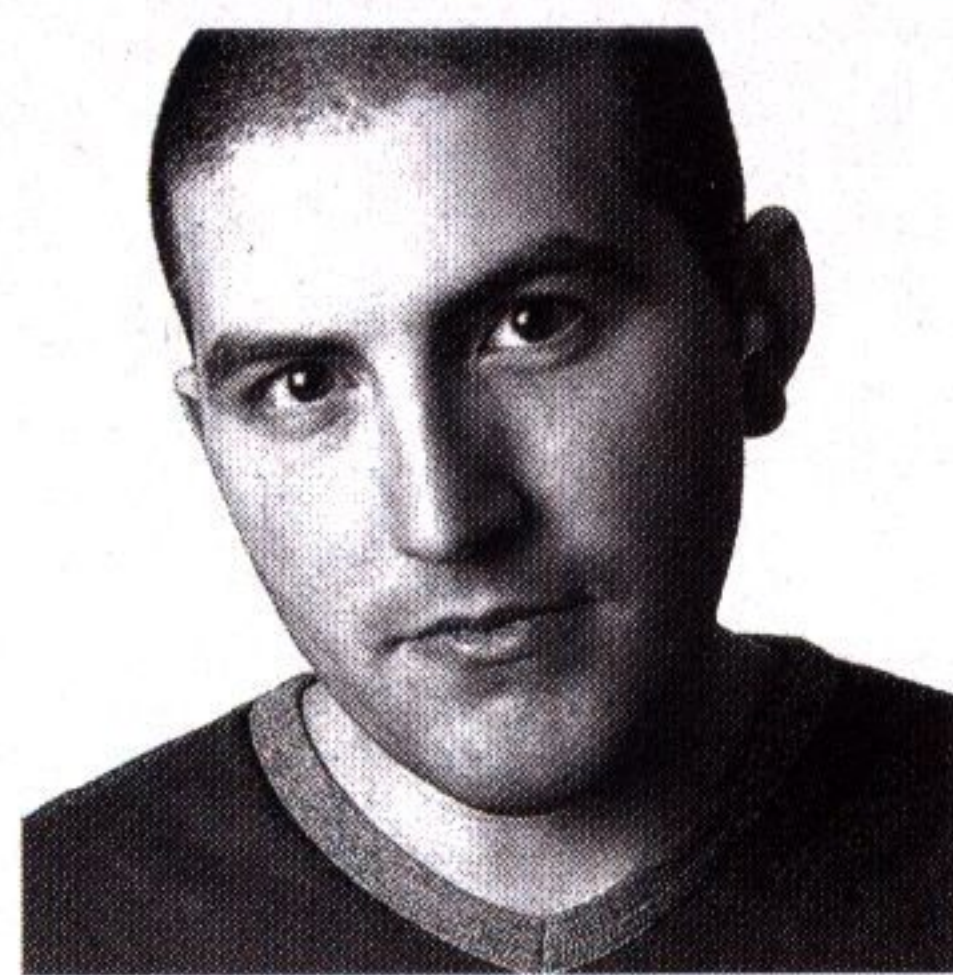
**ANTHONY HOLDEN**

Quake III: Arena



**RHIANNA PRATCHETT**

Neverwinter Nights



**MARK HILL**

Soldier Of Fortune II



**STEVE HILL**

Mobile Forces



**CHRIS ANDERSON**

The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind

Somewhere very hot and very cheap. I've just spent all my money on my last holiday.

Back to Japan, home of all things good.

Bed.

I've just been to Venice, so that's my holiday done for the year.

I'm in Japan watching the World Cup so stop pestering me.

Norrath.









# NEVERWINTER NIGHTS

■ £34.99 | Pub: Infogrames | Dev: Bioware | ETA: June 28 | [www.neverwinternights.com](http://www.neverwinternights.com)

**REQUIRES** PIII 450, 128Mb RAM and a 16Mb 3D card **DESIRES** PIII 800, 256Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card

**Rhianna Pratchett plays the RPG the world has been waiting for**



**IF, IN THE** great playground of computer games, the FPS is the school bully and the RTS is the brainy kid, then the hardcore RPG is definitely seen as the kid whose mum gave him the wholemeal bean sprouts and hummus sandwiches every day. The one with the helmet haircut and the hand-knitted scarf that made him look like his neck was in traction. But considering how the wider world views computer gamers, this is just geek snobbery. No matter how far down you come in the pecking order, you'll always find someone uncooler than you.

However, since *Dungeon Siege* and *Morrowind* have sashayed down the games catwalk with their big and beautiful 3D implants, RPGs are suddenly looking very rock and roll. For many fans though, those two were simply the support acts, because this is the one they've been waiting to see. So

would the people in the cheap seats clap their hands, and the rest of you stroke your beards in appreciation of the game called *Neverwinter Nights*.

## THE ULTIMATE CREATION

While *Baldur's Gate I* and *II* have been capturing the hearts and minds of role-players everywhere over the last four years, *Neverwinter Nights* has

to fully 3D graphics has created a world that's so rich and immersive, it's like being a Bioware virgin and experiencing the magic of your first *Baldur's Gate* game all over again.

Although there's around 60-80 hours of gameplay (compared to *BGI*'s estimated 200 hours) it's clear after just a few hours that this is the way the *Baldur's Gate* world was

**"The move from isometric to fully 3D has created a world that's rich and immersive"**

been in the background, the baby that Bioware has been quietly working away on. And it's a beautiful baby – not only the game they thought fans really wanted to play, but also the game they really wanted to make. Although it might not be as much of a looker as *Dungeon Siege*, the move from isometric

always meant to be seen and explored. The hours you play through in *NN*, and there will be many, seem more well rounded and meatier than in previous incarnations. You feel like you're working harder. It's like peddling away on an exercise bike with a roast dinner in one hand and a book by Wittgenstein in the

## INPERSPECTIVE

### DUNGEON SIEGE

Reviewed Issue 114, Score 89%

With its gorgeous 3D graphics, *Dungeon Siege* focuses more on constant hack 'n' slash action and dungeon crawl-style gameplay.

### MORROWIND

Reviewed Issue 117, Score 94%

A superb and massively open-ended alternative. Hardcore role-playing at its very best, but less accessible to newbies.



other, instead of scoffing your face with crisps while monging out in front of *The Sopranos*.

## LONE RANGER

If you're a hardcore fan worrying that the single hero aspect (unlike Bioware's previous party-based epics) has turned the world into a kind of *Diablo II* clone, then let me put your mind at rest. *Neverwinter Nights* is about as much like *Diablo II* as *Dungeon Siege* is like *Baldur's Gate* (in other words not very much save the barest of gameplay mechanics). The whole idea behind the single character is to create a feeling of importance for this lone warrior. You are the hero,

meaning you're not stuck babysitting a load of whinging hangers-on.

However, the game does introduce the feature of henchmen, of which you'll only find a handful in the entire game. They are free-thinking characters who'll join you, for a price, and each one has their own history and agendas. They'll fight by your side, gain experience and levels and even offer a bit of advice or a romantic interlude from time to time. You can give them various orders about whether they should use ranged or melee weapons when fighting, how quickly they heal you and the distance they keep, but that's about all you can do

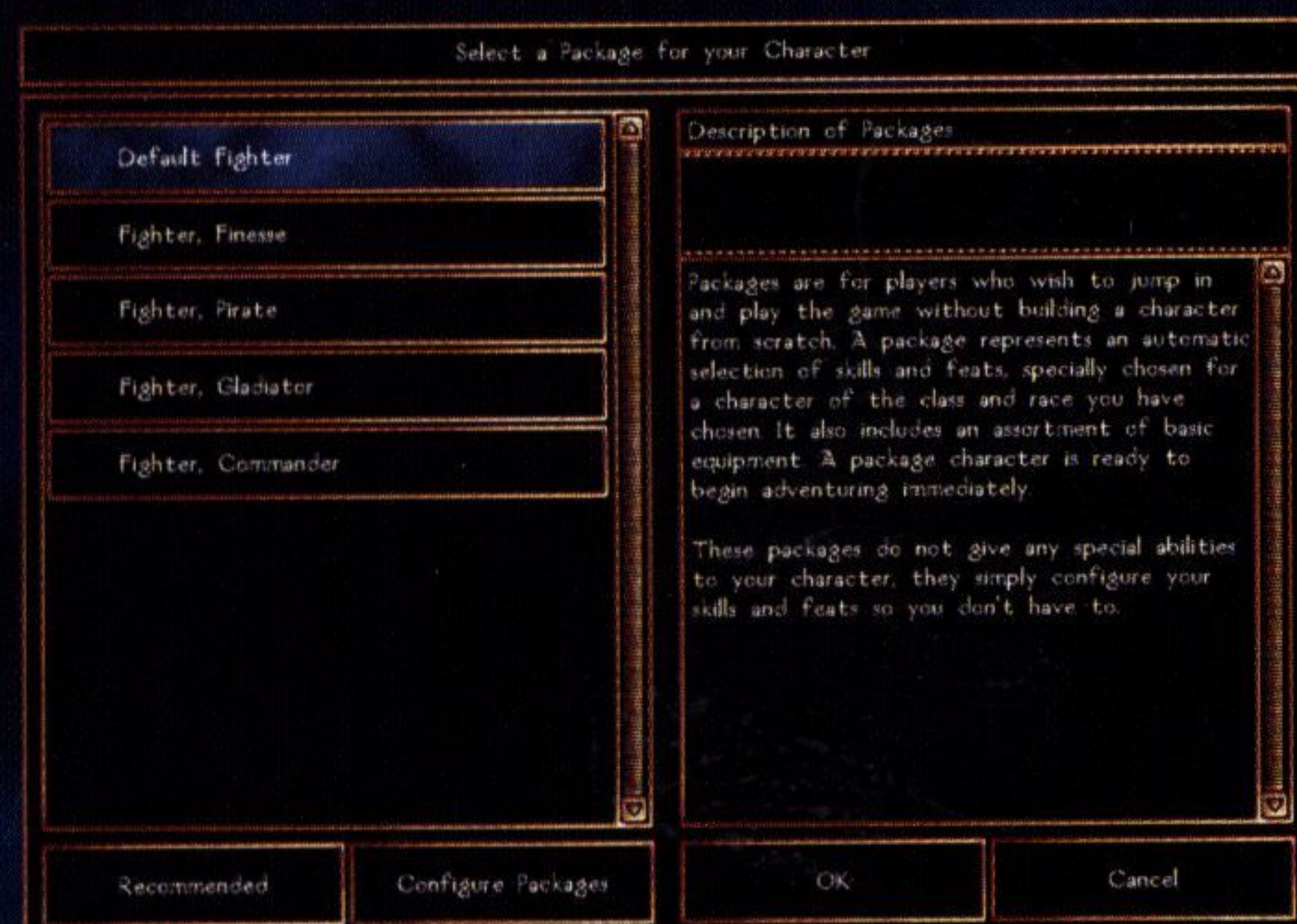
**"Neverwinter Nights is as much like *Diablo II* as *Dungeon Siege* is like *Baldur's Gate*"**

## THE USUAL SUSPECTS



### Eyebrow protection is underrated.

There are no great surprises as far as character races go, including the by-now familiar human, dwarf, elf, half-elf, half-orc and halfling. There are 11 classes: barbarian, bard, cleric, druid, fighter, monk, paladin, ranger, rogue, sorcerer and wizard, all of which come with their own pre-determined skills. Instead of your character's stats being decided by a dice roll, you configure them using a basic points system.



### Make sure you choose the best skills to suit your character.

Alongside the benefits inherent to race and class you can also assign skills and feats to your character. Skills are the areas in which you choose to specialise, such as spellcraft, persuading and moving silently – these can be gradually improved as your character increases in levels. Feats are innate abilities along the lines of knockdown, dodge and combat casting, and new ones can be learned every three levels.



with them as they don't have an inventory or any weapon/armour slots. A conscious attempt, claims Bioware, to keep the focus on the central character.

Magic users will be able to summon creatures and have familiars, the latter being an aspect that never really took off in previous BG games because of the penalties incurred when your familiar died. But in a world where you need all the help you can get, a strong familiar – like a hellhound or a panther – is a godsend to vulnerable magic users like sorcerers and wizards. Again, like henchmen, you can give them orders, interact with them and even possess them to do a bit of reconnaissance work. They don't tend to be as bright as henchmen who generally try to make life easier for you, and you'll sometimes find yourself having to retrace your steps to find your familiar who's gotten lost somewhere. But when they see you again, they bound up to you so joyfully and look so soppy it's very easy to forgive their misdeeds.

## GUIDING LIGHT

Bioware has made a considerable effort to refine the art of character creation, in order to make it as accessible as possible for those players not so used to the ins and outs of a game based on an AD&D rule set. As you put your character together at the start of the game, you'll almost feel as though someone from Bioware is sitting next to you and guiding you through the process, with



**Piles of burning plague victims litter the streets. Must be some kind of fuel shortage.**

'recommended' buttons, which basically make your choices for you as you navigate through the creation process. You can find the rest of the character information in the boxout on the left, because I'm sure that as RPG fans, you probably know one end of a halfling from another, and would

much rather find out about how the game plays.

Aside from the groupies we've already mentioned, you're on your own. And what does a young adventurer look for when they've just set off into the world with a shiny sword and a fresh pair of underpants? A little bit of

## IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC

One of the most significant set of feats in *Neverwinter Nights* is *Metamagic*. This particular group increases the power, length and speed of a spell, making magic users much more interesting, not to mention extremely powerful at higher levels, so drop your sword and pick up a wand.



**Empower a magic missile and cast twice as many spells.**



**“The atmosphere of a doomed, infested and pissed-off city is created extremely well”**

action, of course. Luckily your first bit comes right at the start of the game with your character being initiated into the Neverwinter city militia. You learn that the city is currently in the throws of a mysterious and deadly plague, which has reduced the districts to war zones. The city authorities are hoping to find a cure in four magical beasts that have been brought to the city, but unfortunately the main keep of Neverwinter comes under attack early on in the game and the creatures flee into the city.

#### THE LITTLEST HERO

So you're pushed out into the plague-infested city and charged with the task of getting these creatures back, which is the focus of the first chapter. Bioware is particularly fond of city crawls, and the quests and general feel of the city of Neverwinter with its various districts, is similar to the city of Amn in *Baldur's Gate II*. Bioware claim not to have ripped any one quest straight out of *Baldur's Gate II*, but you do find yourself thinking: “Hey, that quest's almost the same as the one where...”

But that aspect doesn't spoil it one little bit, as the fact that you're playing in a fully 3D world makes all the difference. Because you start in a quarantined city the graphics won't initially grab you in the same way as the open countryside of *Dungeon Siege* and *Morrowind*. But the atmosphere of a doomed,

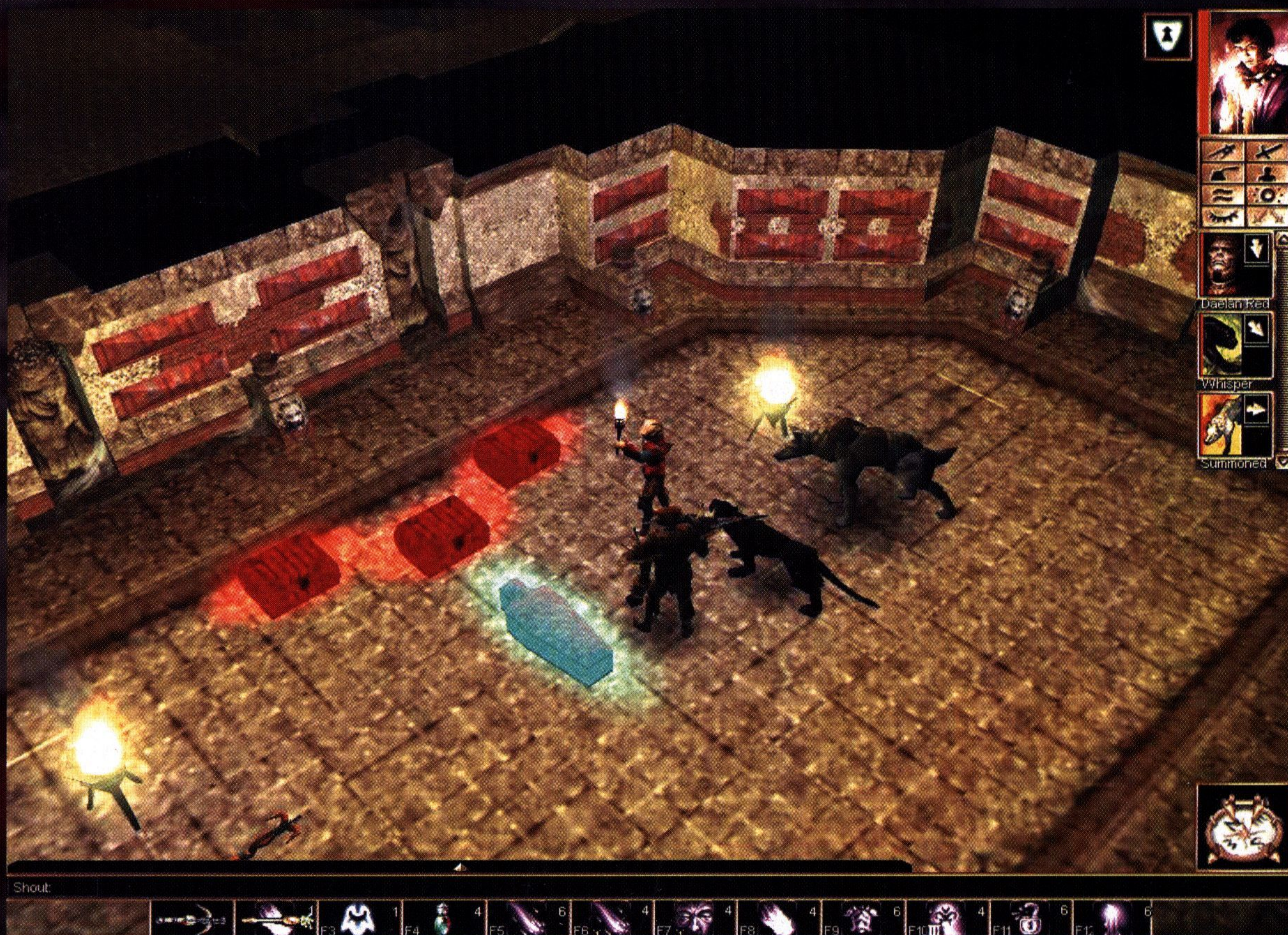
infested and thoroughly pissed-off city is created extremely well. Everywhere you go there are burning piles of plague victims (you even have to set fire to a few yourself), citizens camp out on the streets too frightened to go back to their homes and too poor to go anywhere else.

You spend most of your time trying to sort out people's problems, which usually involves killing off zombies, malicious wizards or giant beetles, looting a few establishments or generally helping empower the local unfortunates. Every quest you do is important to someone,

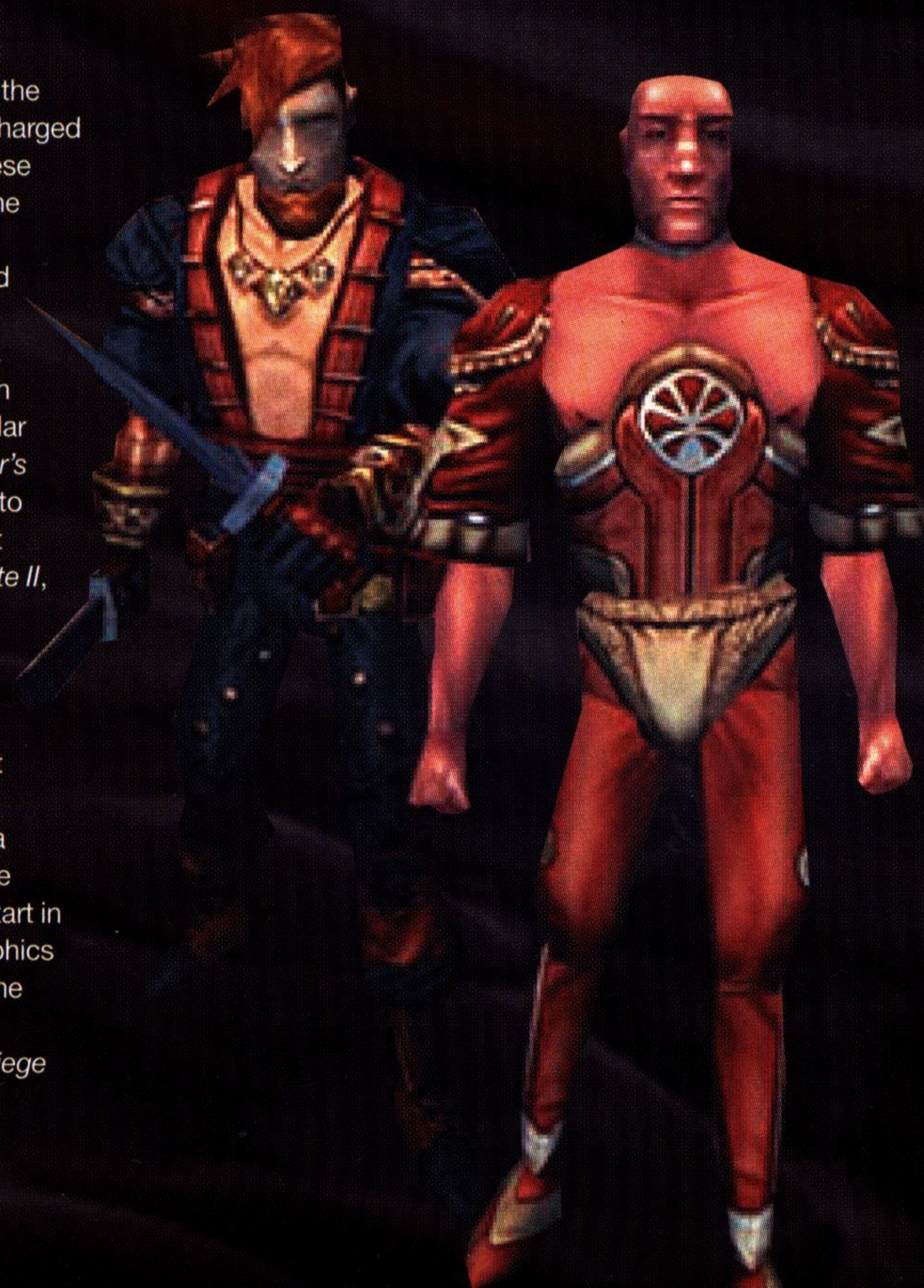
and often helps you understand more about the main storyline. There's none of the annoying little ‘my friend has a rather nasty gerbil infestation’-style quests, which are simply there to build up your experience points. Of course good and virtuous isn't the only way to play, you can easily take

advantage of the climate of fear and pickpocket, blackmail and sneak your way through the game, but don't expect to make too many friends.

And more than ever Bioware has tried to reflect your character stats by the way people respond to you (you might want to think about that before you go round



**If traps keep killing you too easily, drink an endurance potion to temporarily up your constitution.**



#### THE GAME INTERFACE



**Find out how close to death your enemy is with this menu.**

The art of creating a good interface is more important to a game than it would initially appear. Despite the tempting nature of the pause button, a true gamer will always want to carry out their battles as seamlessly as possible. The interface in *Neverwinter Nights* is both comfortable and customisable. The radial menu is your first point of call when interacting with a world and brings up a list of commands and spells that are available to you in a similar way to *Freedom Force*. But far more easy to use once you progress further into the game is the three-tiered quick slot bar with which you can access everything you'll need in a fight at the touch of a button.





Be warned, there's no shortage of combat in *Neverwinter Nights*.

thieving everything in sight). Every now and then you will get chances in a conversation to elicit more information out of a character by persuading, lying, flirting and using your skills of insight and lore, which will succeed or fail randomly on a background dice roll, based on your charisma, wisdom and intelligence. You'll also find that if your intelligence is set to eight or below you'll start speaking as if you've just given yourself a lobotomy with your own axe.

#### SMOOTH OPERATOR

The main plotline and the multitude of sub-quests are generally less complex and prolonged than in previous

titles. But the atmosphere is just as dark and blood-soaked as ever, and makes *Dungeon Siege*'s vague plot look like a bedtime story: "Ho, Ho, Ho said the evil goblin" etc.

In order to maintain more fluid gameplay the *Neverwinter Night's* team has also done away with the constant cut-scenes that saturated previous games. Resting is also no longer such a laborious affair, as it simply involves your party sitting down for about ten seconds while they heal up and re-learn spells. This does wonders for the gameplay and it makes the whole thing a much smoother, if slightly unrealistic experience.

The *Baldur's Gate* series was always particularly good at creating an unparalleled sense of atmosphere, even in an isometric environment, and it's something that has thankfully carried over into *Neverwinter Nights*. Every aspect of the 3D environment has been utilised, from weather effects to a full day and night cycle with superb ambient light effects. This works especially well when the darkness closes in on the festering city and you have to get out your little burning torch to light the way. And that little bit of light somehow serves to make the approaching dragging sounds and gurgling screams all the more disturbing.

The 3D world also lends itself exceedingly well to beautiful and frantic battles, especially when you become a high-level magic user. It really is a thing of beauty to watch your enemies cower as your henchman hits them repeatedly over the head with a double axe, while you're saying: "I know what you're thinking. Did

#### TRAPPERS DELIGHT



Make sure your followers don't trigger traps.

The *Neverwinter* world is a veritable paradise for those of you with a sneaky nature. Both setting traps, disarming traps and picking locks and pockets have been carried over from *Baldur's Gate II*, but now you can also flag traps to warn other players about them and retrieve enemy traps and reset them elsewhere. Picking locks is also no longer just for rogues and thieves as lock picks are available to all classes, and when used will improve your character's lock picking skill no matter what their occupation.

she fire six fireballs or only five? Well, to tell you the truth in all this excitement I've kinda lost track myself."

#### BUILD YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

Aside from the single-player aspect, *Neverwinter Nights* is handing those of you that started off your role-playing careers with pen and paper AD&Ds the perfect opportunity to go up to the attic and dig out

those scribbled-on sheets of paper, so that you can recreate your imaginative yearnings in glorious 3D by way of the powerful toolkit and Dungeon Master client that ships with the game.

Bioware aimed to create a toolkit that was going to be easy for anyone to use; in fact, they designed the entire tile-style building blocks of the game around that premise, and it works bloody well.

**"The atmosphere is just as dark and blood-soaked as ever and makes *Dungeon Siege* look like a bedtime story"**



Fireballs are one of the most effective lower-level spells, causing damage to multiple targets.

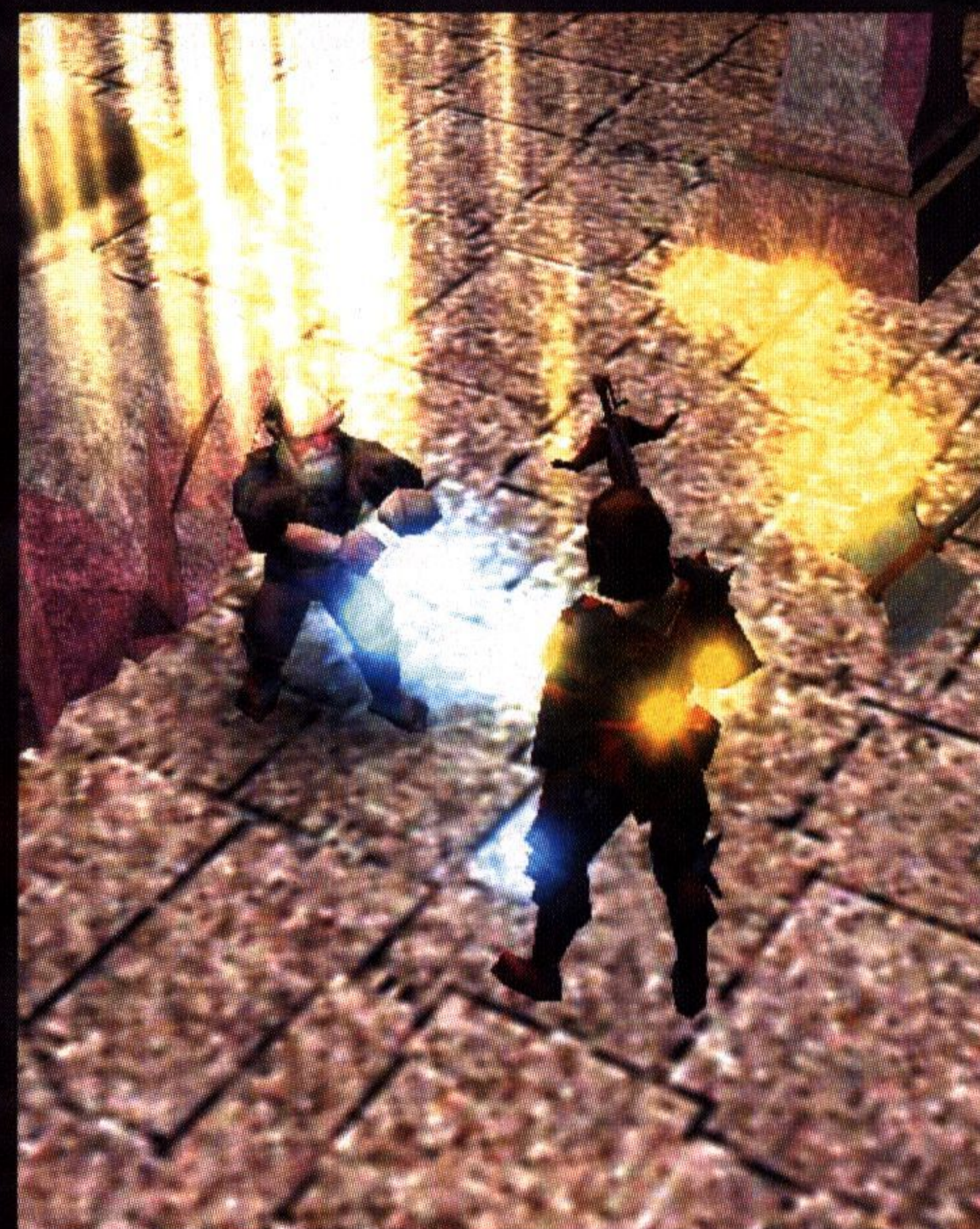


Key areas in the game will be highlighted in the mini-map.





Spellcasting makes full use of the 3D environment, and the spells themselves are spectacular.



Healing your party is a quick and easy process.

For a game that seems so outwardly complex and full of gameplay details, creating levels couldn't be simpler. Not only does the manual include a step-by-step guide to creating basic levels, it also shows you how to unlock and edit some of the existing levels from the game. These tools are going to make it very easy for Bioware's online community to support the game. Alongside the toolkit, the DM client will allow any would-be dungeon masters to guide adventurers through their levels, possessing creatures, designing quests and creating a perpetual storyline as an original AD&D DM would. Even for those of you who wouldn't normally dream of touching a level editor, it would be very difficult not to swell with



just a little bit of pride when you see your first herd of killer badgers come stamping out of a forest and nipping at your mate's ankles.

turned into a film, it's not going to please every hardcore fan, but it does a damn good job of taking a world that RPG fans everywhere have known for

## "For a game that seems so outwardly complex, creating levels couldn't be simpler"

### TWO THUMBS UP

Bioware's gamble of taking their long-established isometric universe into the world of 3D adventures has definitely paid off. Although there has been an obvious bias towards a more hack 'n' slash style of gameplay, the things that made the *Baldur's Gate* games so great, such as an absorbing storyline and detailed character development, are still very much a part of *Neverwinter Nights*. Like a book that's

years, and opening it up to a wider audience.

Games such as *Baldur's Gate*, *Pool Of Radiance* and *Neverwinter Nights* owe as much to the original AD&D world as the world owes to them. Born out of the community, they have done much to elevate role-playing from a backroom hobby to a worldwide genre. With *Neverwinter Nights* it really feels as though an AD&D game is giving something

## MISSED OPPORTUNITY



Oh, the green glowing look is so last season.

Even though the emphasis is on the player character, henchman still seem a bit under-used. Although your inventory is more than big enough to hold everything you need (plus all the things you just carry around because you don't know what the hell to do with them), there's so much great weaponry in the game that you just end up selling it because you have no real use for it. This is especially true if you rely on spells primarily, can't wear much armour and can only use limited weapons. If you're one of life's natural hoarders, it'll pain you to have to discard so much stuff that would have been much better served bedecking your companion.



You have a huge inventory that's split into six different areas.

more fundamental back to the community, rather than just increased recognition. It's giving substance.

*Neverwinter Nights* isn't just about the 'look what we can do' show-off factor of a great single-player game, it's as much about saying 'look what you can do'. The single-player, multiplayer, DM and toolset don't just make a role-playing game, they make a complete role-playing package.

*Neverwinter Nights* is not only a classic game that will appeal to both old fans and new, but it's also a perfect nod of acknowledgement from the latest technology to its humble beginnings as an outlet for vivid imaginations everywhere. The world is yours again. **PC**

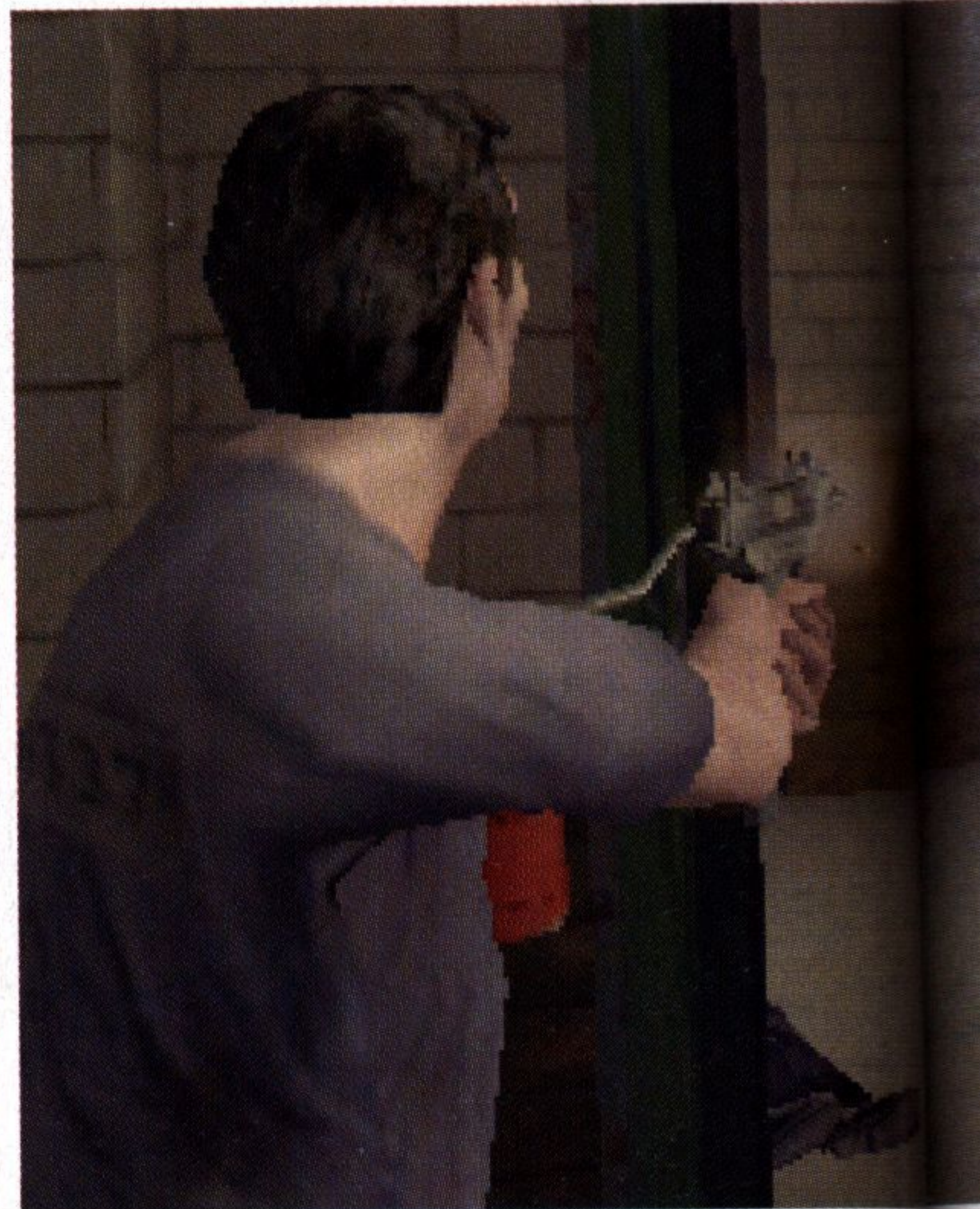
## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Same old magic
- ✓ Great character development
- ✓ Involving storyline
- ✓ Innovative toolkit and DM mode
- ✗ Henchmen are under-used
- ✗ Simple plotlines

# 91

The complete RPG package





If you can complete the whole game on the hardest setting and limited saves, we salute you.

# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II: DOUBLE HELIX

■ £34.99 | Pub: Activision | Dev: Raven | ETA: Out Now | [www.ravensoft.com](http://www.ravensoft.com)

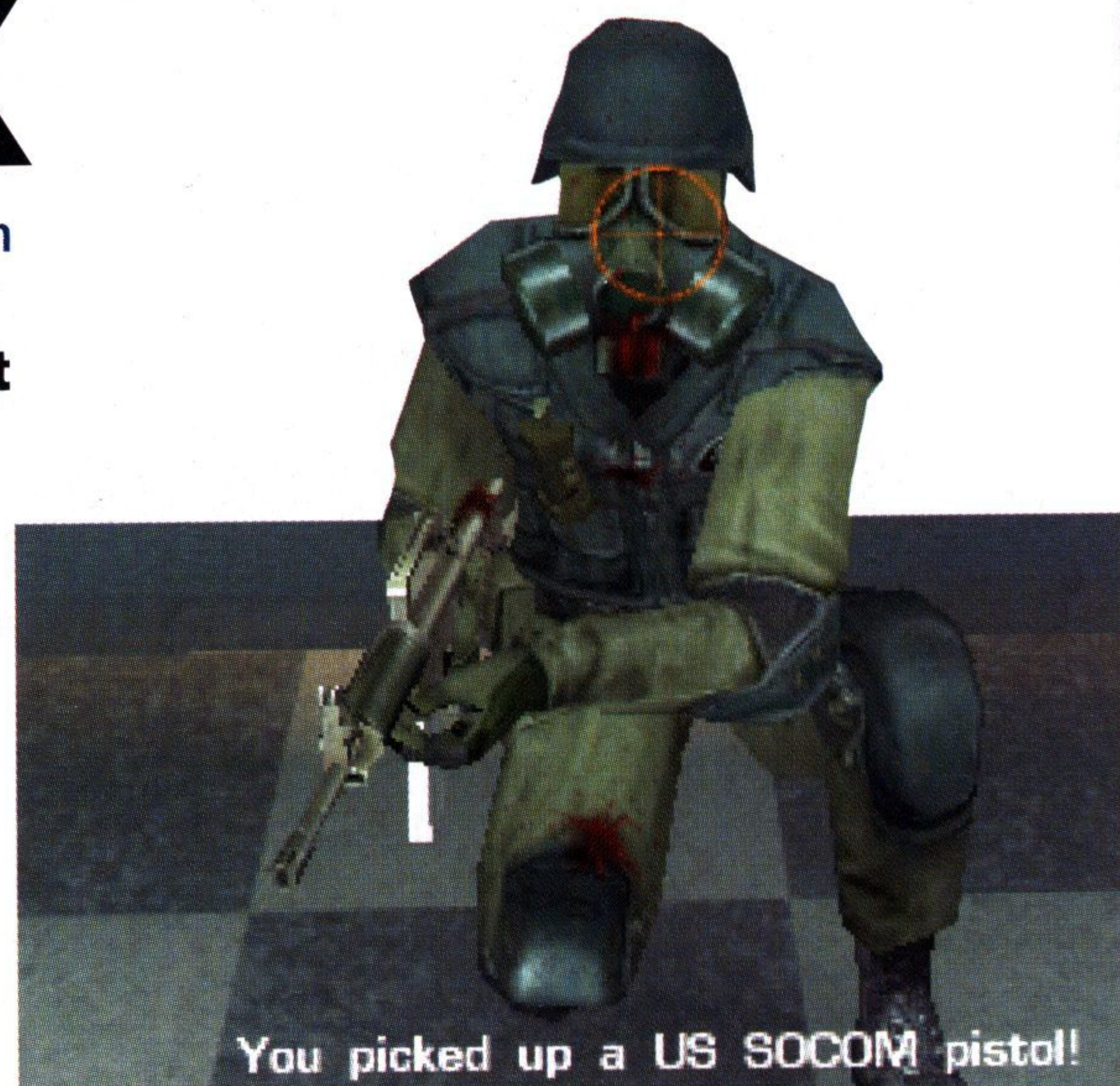
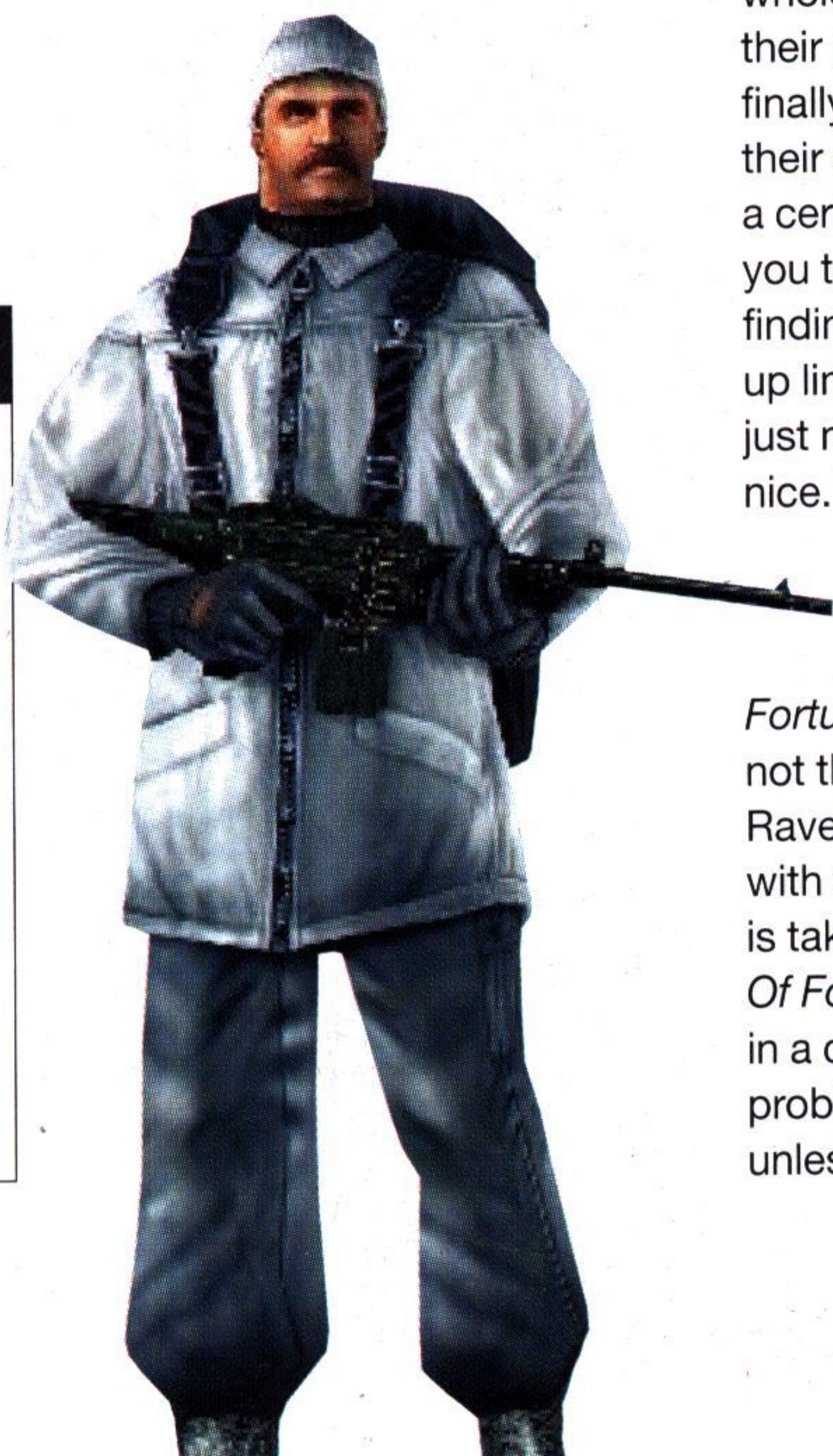
REQUIRES PIII 300, 64Mb RAM and a 16Mb 3D card DESIRES PIII 700, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card

You won't find him supporting the National Rifle Association, but Mark Hill has a soft spot for bullets and gore on his screen



**YOU MAY** think it's easy to pull any game to pieces that doesn't meet our high standards, to vilify with violent gusto all its shortcomings and build layer upon layer of witty insults and scathing comments. It isn't.

You see, unlike you, we get to meet a lot of the people who develop these games and, for the most part, they're a decent and earnest bunch of chaps who've spent the better part of a year putting their whole heart and soul into their baby. And when you finally see that the fruit of their sleepless labours is a certifiable piece of cack, you tend to feel sorry for them, finding it hard to rip said baby up limb by limb. Or maybe it's just me. Maybe I'm just too nice. Which is why it might surprise you to learn that I was looking forward to laying into *Soldier Of Fortune II* with all my might. It's not that I have anything against Raven, but I do have a problem with this game's licence, which is taken from America's *Solider Of Fortune* magazine, which in a country plagued by gun problems is sick and wrong unless you're the sort of



As you might expect, *Soldier Of Fortune II* isn't short of the odd weapon or two.

redneck who thinks it's every American's god-given right to shoot anyone who doesn't kiss the flag every night. You know, the sort of people *South Park*'s Jimbo and Ned caricature so brilliantly.

## A MORAL JUNGLE

It's the reason so many of us had a love/hate relationship with the first game. It was enjoyable in a deeply dumb and visceral way, but there was something unmistakably

wrong and xenophobic about it. Maybe it was the fact that you got a tally at the end of each level telling you how many groins and windpipes you'd hit. Maybe it was the fact that you were penalised for shooting American civilians but not Arabic ones. Most of the fun came from the pure carnage rather than the poor level design or the rather rotten AI.

So, how come I don't hate *Soldier Of Fortune II*? How

## INPERSPECTIVE

### MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT

Reviewed Issue 112, Score 94%

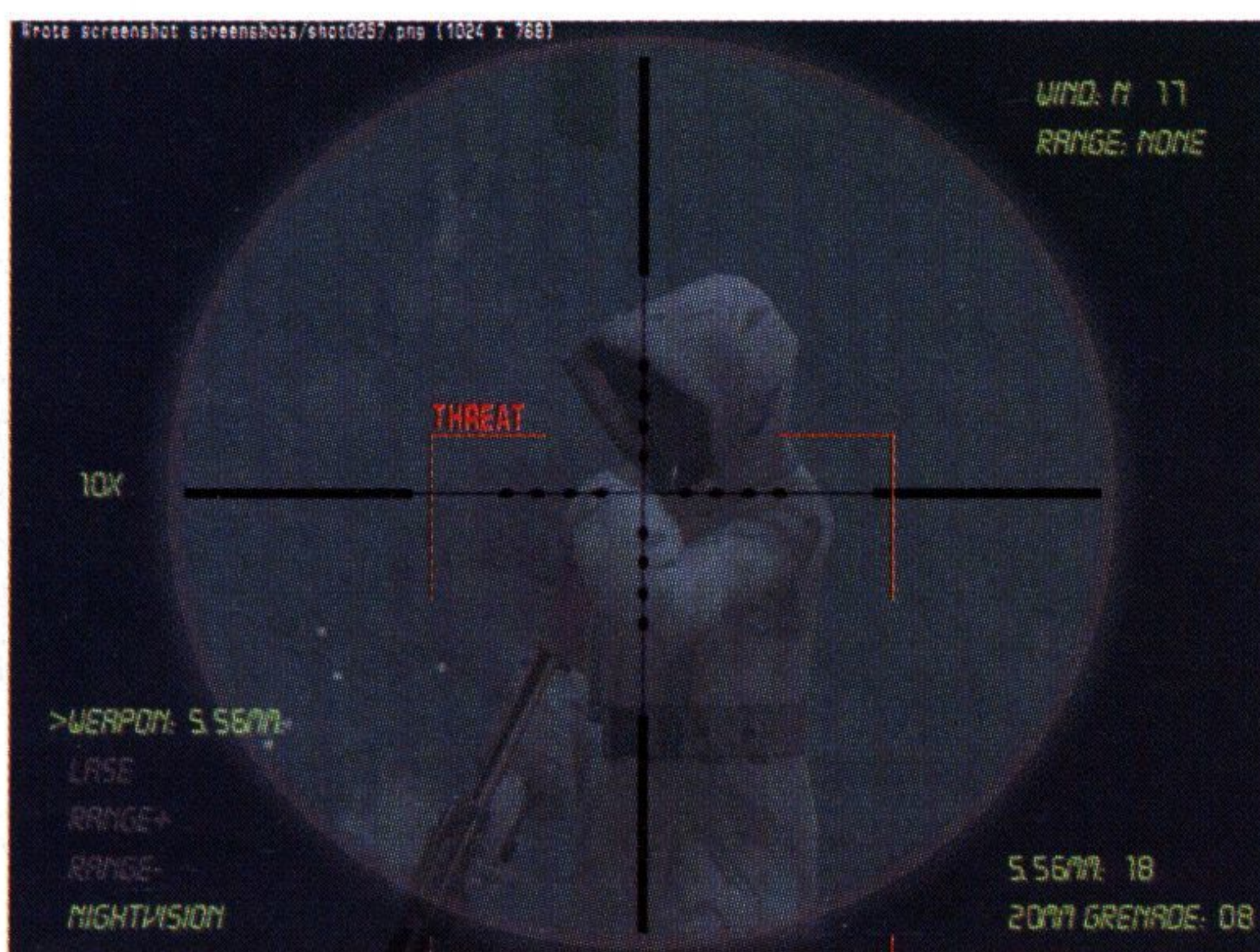
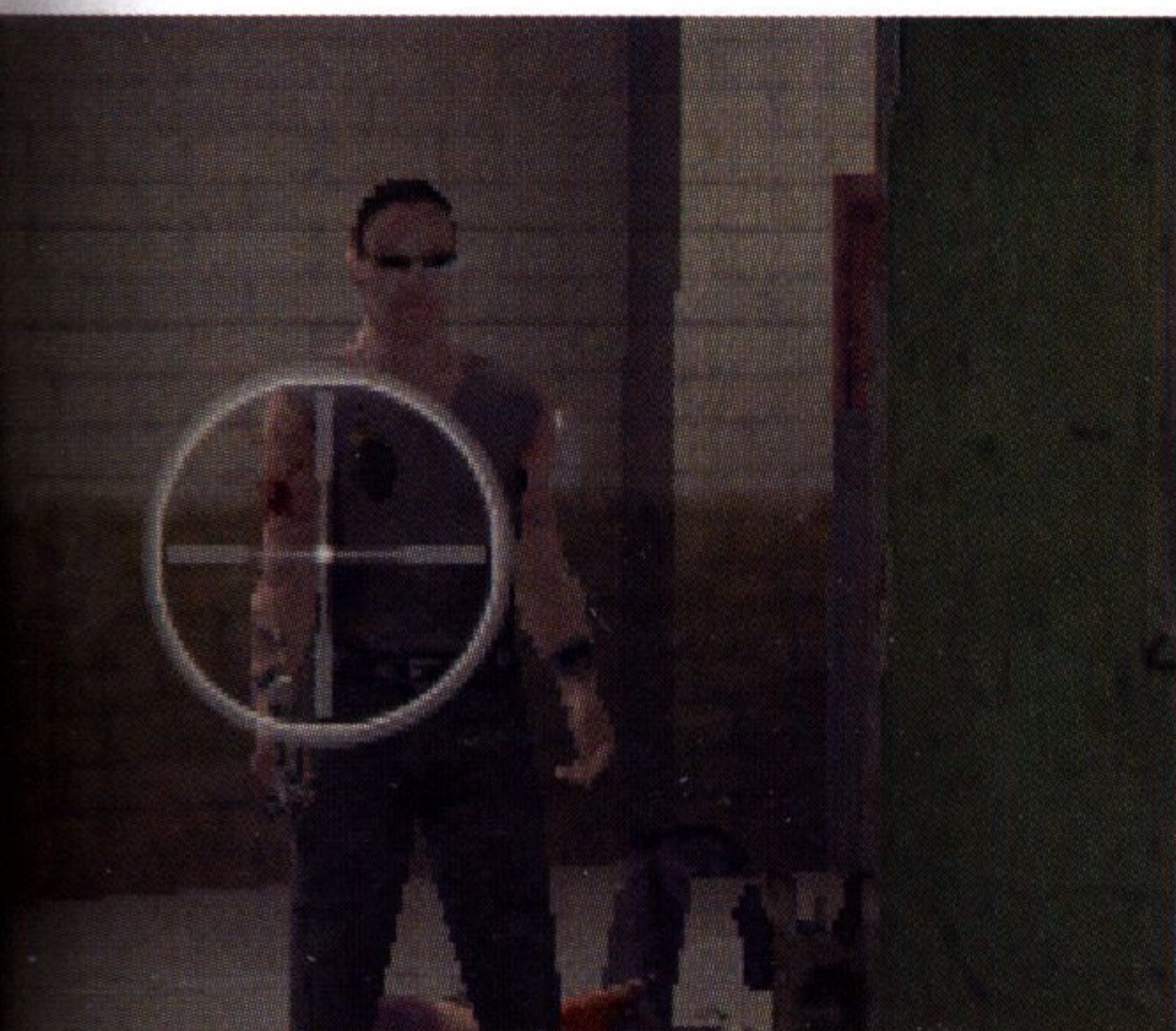
One of the best shooters ever made, also using the *Quake III* engine, and set during WWII. The AI isn't as good, but as a whole it's a more solid title.

### HALF-LIFE: GENERATIONS

Reviewed Issue 71, Score 95%

Still top dog as far as I'm concerned and the template in many ways for some of the levels in *Double Helix*. If you own a PC and haven't played it you should be shot.

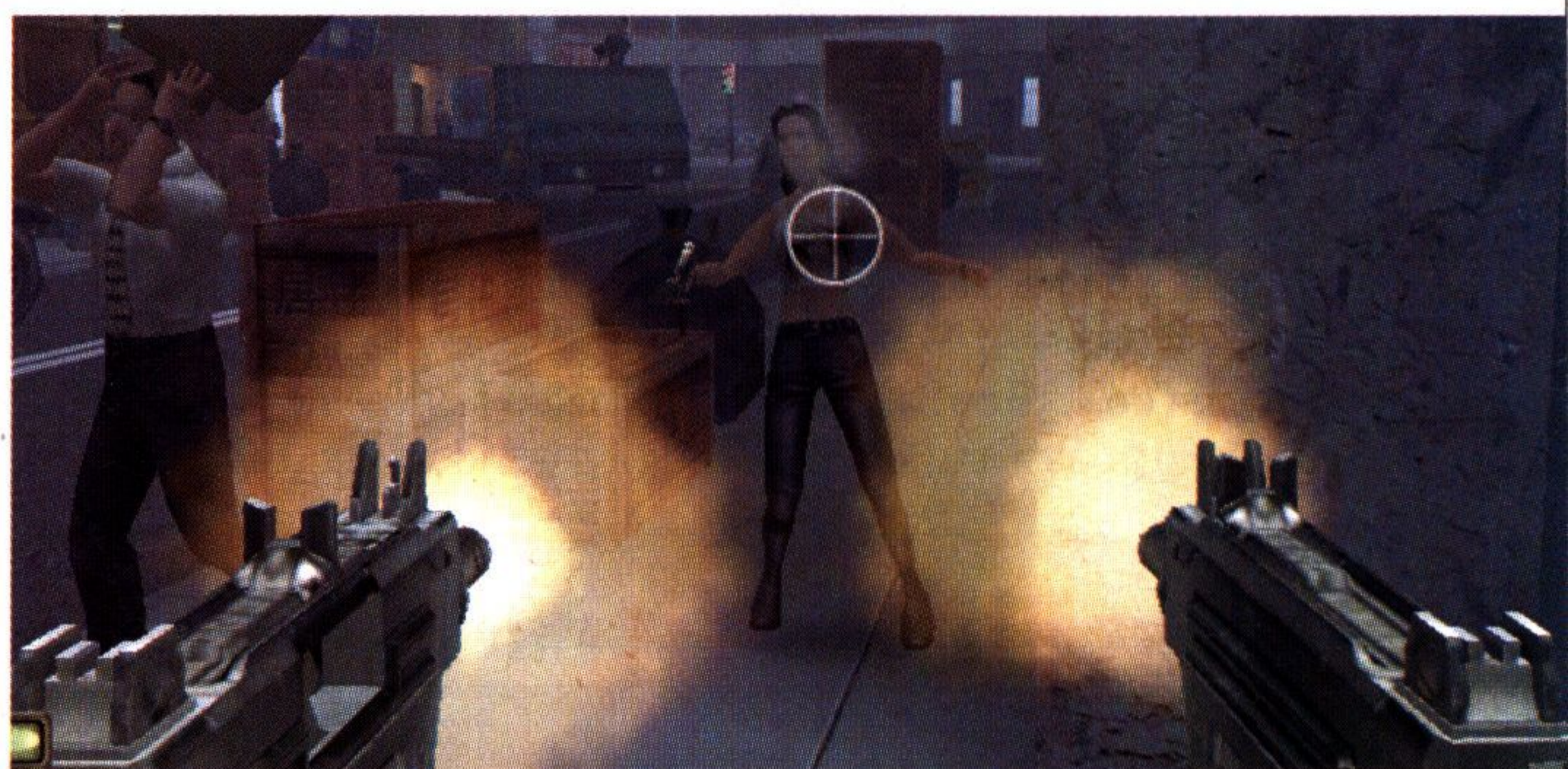




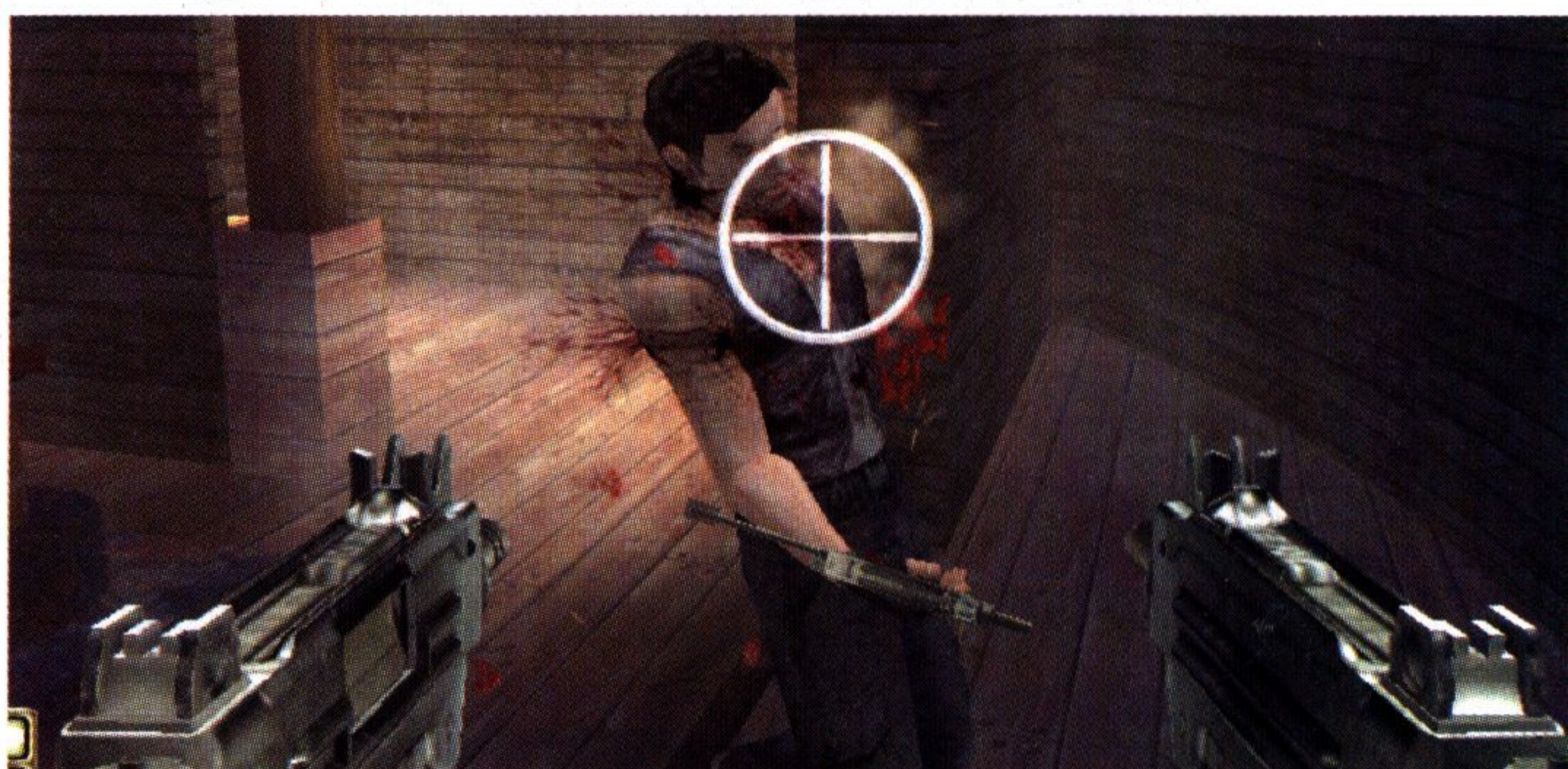
Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill! And relax.



Enemies have great facial expressions, but you won't notice them before they're blown off.



It's this type of action that the *Quake III* engine does best.



Enemies will work together to fill you full of lead.

come I think it's one of the best first-person shooters I've ever played, probably only behind *Half-Life* and *Medal Of Honor*?

Well, for one thing it's a much more liberal affair than the first game. It wisely avoids Islamic terrorists and lets you loose on Russians, Colombians, Chinese and even Yanks. The sick scoring system has gone. Your closest associate is a woman. And, the real clincher, killing any civilian of whatever nationality means you automatically lose the game.

But the thing that really sets it apart and above other shooters is the sublime AI, the very best I've come across since *Half-Life*'s legendary black ops.

Things start off rather badly though, with a first level that is as predictable as it is forgettable, set many years before the main story (Mullins is clean-shaven but still looks like he shoots dogs and beats up women for fun), dull brown environments and enemies as thick as bricks.

It's not until the second mission, set in a Colombian jungle, that things kick off properly. The Colombians not only work in teams (even shouting to each other), they duck behind tall grass, they hop over walls, they round you up and shower you with grenades. And then you come across a group of marines who join you on your mission and display some great AI of their own. One of them is sent to scout ahead and waves for the rest to follow

**"But the thing that really sets it apart and above other shooters is the sublime AI"**

if the coast is clear, and the commanding officer tells you off if you wander too far from the team. They react to situations as well as the enemy, hiding behind trees and running back when a grenade is sent their way. It's a shame more use isn't made of friendly AI.

#### SNEAK AND DESTROY

The next mission presents another surprise: stealth. It's not exactly what you associate with what was once little more than *3D Operation Wolf*, but Raven has made a bold move to add some variety to the missions (you can even carry bodies to hide them *Thief*-style). The problem is that the *Quake* engine just isn't built for stealth – as Raven itself should have learned from the sneaky *Voyager* levels. And these are

even more annoying than the ones in *Medal Of Honor*, where you had to stop the enemy from reaching the alarms. Here, the enemy need only catch sight of you and the bells start ringing followed by plenty of manpower, as if they were all connected telepathically.

#### RANDOM VIOLENCE



THE GORE NEVER ENDS WITH THE RANDOM MISSION GENERATOR

If all you want is a quick blast without all of the hassle of playing through the actual game, you can set up a randomly generated map in just the type of environment you want, with just the sort of weapons you want. You can choose between assassination, escape, infiltration and demolition, although they all take place in similar locations and aren't exactly overflowing with detail. Still, it's a nice little addition, and it does work quite well, particularly when you tweak the difficulty all the way up and try to find out just how good you are against a time-limit.

But this isn't the only way to ensure the longevity of the game. A multiplayer test demo has already proved popular online and there are several mods on the way. Considering the quality of the Colombian jungle mission, a Vietnam mod shouldn't take long to arrive.





Soldiers speak and shout to each other all the time, making them more realistic.

These levels never last long though, and you can just ignore the stealth and go for pure action since the mission isn't forfeited once you're discovered. So you can do your best at avoiding trouble and killing

silently and then just let rip when they've seen you.

I should mention at this juncture that, played on one of the higher levels, *Double Helix* is a real hard nut. The limited save games are still a great idea, but you'll be

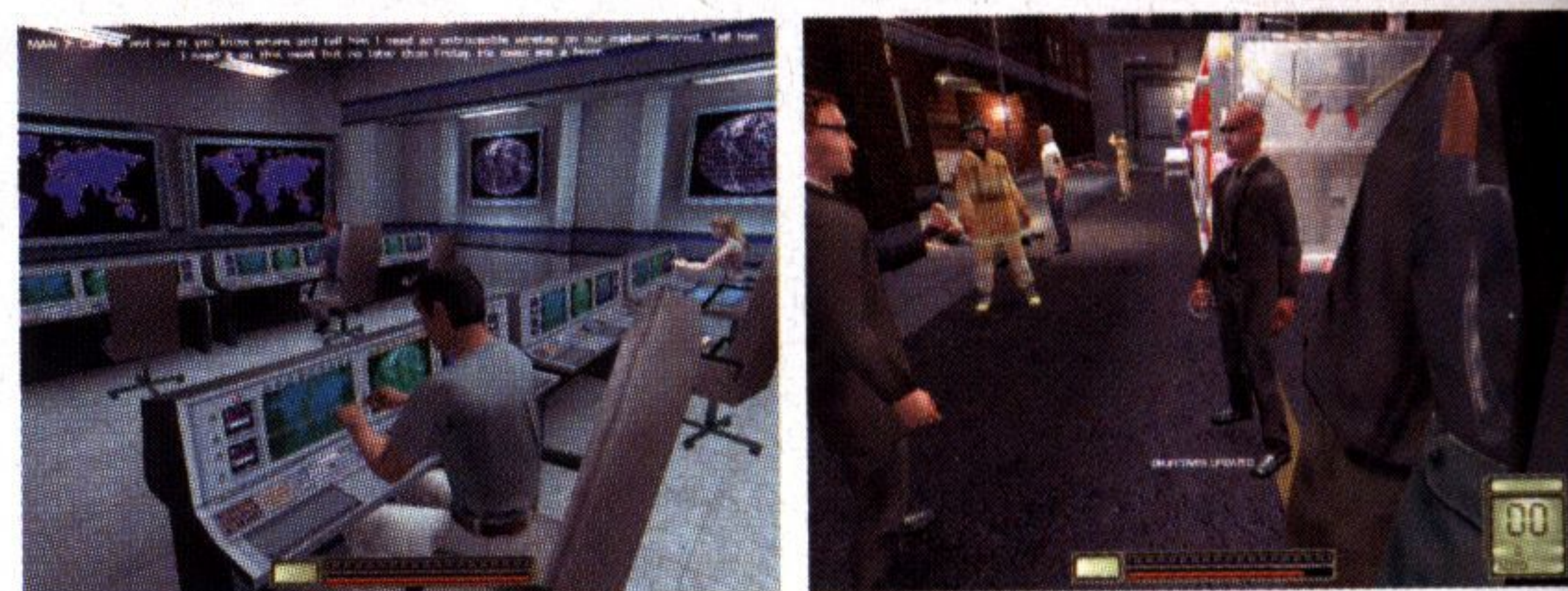
thankful that you can select an unlimited amount if you want without compromising the AI quality. The upside is that nearly all the levels later on are so good that it's no punishment to play through whole sections again. I still have save games from *Half-Life* where you come up against soldiers or black ops that I can play over and over again without getting bored. It's the closest to fighting other people, and *Soldier Of Fortune II* comes close to replicating that.

#### OOZING

And then there's the gore. You have to question how much fun it is to see someone's face explode, their leg blown across the room, their windpipe gushing blood, time and time again. But if the violence bothers you that much, you can always turn it off.

There are other problems that stop it from being the game it could have been – small bugs, ridiculously heavy fogging in some areas – but on the whole it oozes quality. The graphics are tremendously detailed (though enemies do have a generic look) and the levels exploit the *Quake III* engine to the full. You're never lost without knowing what to do

### LOOK MA, NO WEAPONS!



#### IT'S NOT JUST ALL AMMO AND INTESTINES HERE YOU KNOW

Between missions you get to play through some story segments, making the game feel much more cohesive and atmospheric. It's a similar idea to *Voyager's* mid-level walks through the ship, but here you get to visit different places (a quarantined village, the infamous shop and a hospital, as well as the bookstore from the first game). There is so much detail and so much going on that you can't help but wonder how much the developers have played *Deus Ex*. Apart from all the conversations and freedom to explore during these segments there's even a direct lift from the *Ion Storm* masterpiece when you go into a women's toilet and get told off by the girl in there. Not that we'd ever do that kind of thing, of course.



*Soldier Of Fortune II* has some of the best AI we've ever seen.

(something that happens all the time in Raven's *Jedi Knight 2*) but it still manages to feel like you're not being led down a path. It's also full of *SiN*-style diversity (shooting from the back of a truck travelling at breakneck speed and then from a helicopter, hovering above a

whole level as you descend in a parachute, carrying an injured character out of a burning building and so on). And, above all, the enemies are a joy to fight against, which is exactly what we want from our shooters. Just don't, whatever you do, go out and buy the magazine. **EW**

**"If the violence bothers you that much, you can always turn it off"**



#### PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Excellent AI
- ✓ Lots of variety
- ✓ Great weapons
- ✓ Top-notch graphics and sound
- ✗ Not all levels are as good
- ✗ Stealth bits can be annoying

**92**

Bloody good

### MISSED OPPORTUNITY



#### FORGET MULLINS, WE WANT BOND

It's not so much a missed opportunity as a change to the whole concept, but this would have been so much better with a cool tongue-in-cheek James Bond type hero instead of a gravel-voiced idiot. The game already has larger than life villains, missions set all over the world and hammy acting, and by going down this route, we could have had more in the way of gadgets. It could also have done with less stealth and some more team-based levels.

And why start off with dumb enemies? They should behave intelligently from the start, but perhaps with lower accuracy.



After a while, the sound of gargling windpipes spouting blood starts to get to you.



THIS BATTLEFIELD JUST GOT BIGGER!

# STAR WARS™ GALACTIC BATTLEFIELDS™ CLONE CAMPAIGNS™

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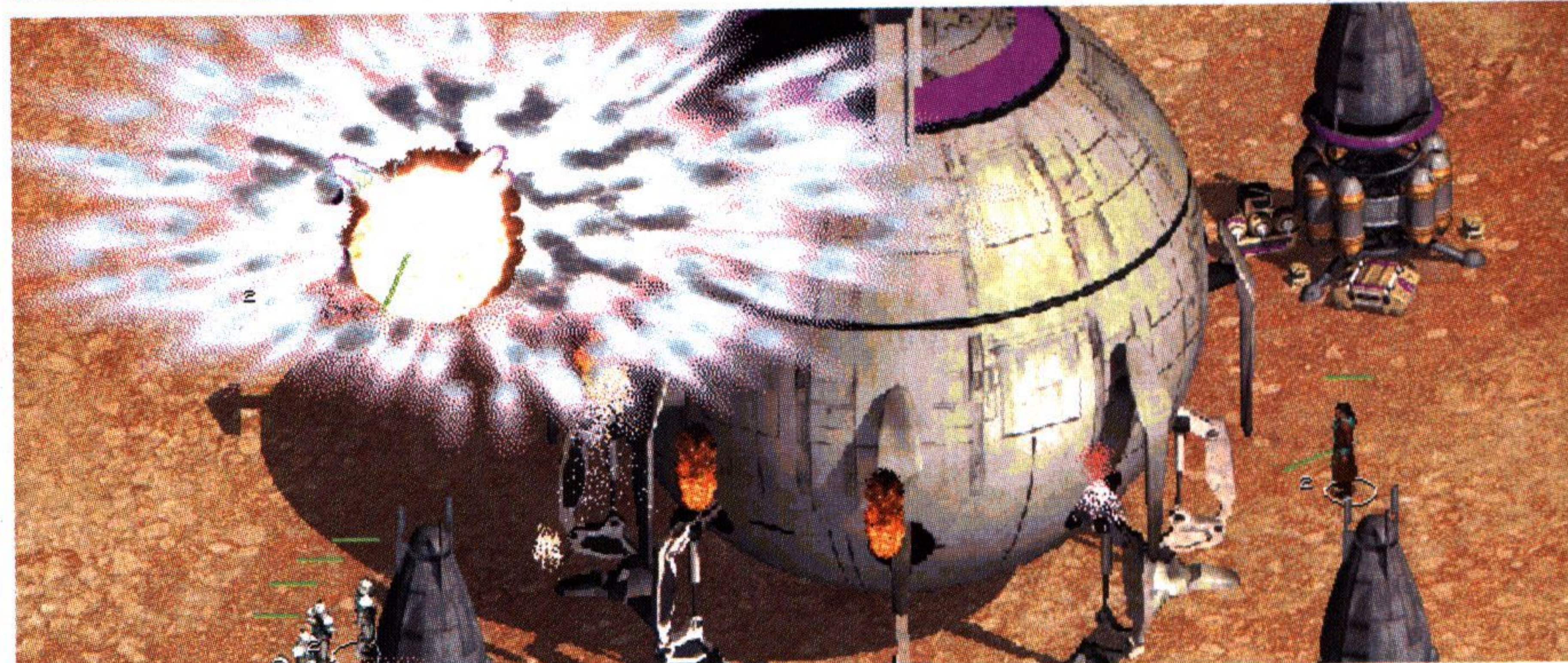
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Once again the space platform levels look a mess.

That'll teach those Galactic fiends to mess with Geonosis.

# STAR WARS: GALACTIC BATTLEFIELDS: CLONE CAMPAIGNS

■ £19.99 | Pub: Activision | Dev: LucasArts | ETA: Out Now | [www.clonecampaigns.com](http://www.clonecampaigns.com)

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Keith Pullin checks out the first add-on pack for LucasArts' hit RTS

**IT'S BIG,** it's spectacular and everyone's talking about it, it's *Star Wars: Episode II: Attack Of The Clones*. In contrast, the first game to be based on this new cinematic phenomenon is small, decidedly unspectacular and unlikely to be spoken about in anything above a secretive whisper. But let's put it all in perspective, *Star Wars Galactic Battlegrounds: Clone Campaigns* is only an add-on pack and as such you wouldn't expect it to be on the same epic level as the film. Add-on packs are notorious for their

cost-effective ability to stoke the dying embers of a game's shelf life and *Clone Campaigns* is no different.

## "The complete list of new units is impressive"

### BESIDE MYSELF

It was a forgone conclusion that *Galactic Battlegrounds* would expand into the *Episode II* universe, but this skinny effort is probably not what most GB or *Star Wars* fans expected. For a start there are only two new campaigns. True, the film only introduces two new civilisations (the Confederacy of Independent Systems and the Galactic Republic), but still, just one measly campaign each seems a little restrained on LucasArts' part. Hardened GB players will easily complete both campaigns in a matter of hours.

Maybe LucasArts is hoping that the addition of new units for the original six civilisations will make up for its lack of

depth elsewhere. A-Wings, Power Droids and Controllable Predators are just a small selection of what's on offer, and in fairness the complete list of new units is impressive – look out too for much needed AI improvements. There are also new technologies

to master including A-wing research, Superconducting Shields and new Droid Upgrades.

The subtle refinements don't stop there either. Civilisations now gain a bonus when allied with other civilisations. For example, if the Gungans formed a partnership with the Rebel Alliance, both parties would receive an increase in food production and a reduction in the cost of building shipyards and shield generators. This is certainly a nice touch when it comes to improving the

feel of the multiplayer game, and it's a good job too, especially considering the limitations of the single-player campaigns.

### THE LURE OF THE DARK SIDE

*Clone Campaigns* is good fun if you're a fan of *Attack Of The Clones* and an avid *Galactic Battlegrounds* player. Ultimately though, the limited number of campaigns means *Clone Campaigns'* appeal will last no more than a few hours. All in all, not a very auspicious start for *Episode II* on the PC. **PCZ**

### INPERSPECTIVE

#### RED ALERT 2: URI'S REVENGE

Reviewed Issue 109, Score 84%  
*Red Alert 2: Uri's Revenge* is *Galactic Battlegrounds'* main rival, and if you're not a huge *Star Wars* fan it's definitely the best alternative.

#### EARTH 2150: THE MOON PROJECT

Reviewed Issue 102, Score 74%  
It's another *Galactic* expansion and quite a good one at that, the only trouble is it costs 30 quid.



"Excuse me, it must have been something I ate."

### PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ New units and characters
- ✓ Alliance bonuses work well
- ✓ Improved AI
- ✗ Only two new campaigns
- ✗ All too brief

68

Great new units, not much gameplay



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CREATE YOUR OWN DESTINY!

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www.divinedivinity.com





With this baby you could shoot the wings off a gnat.



Outdoor areas are far better looking than those indoors.

# THE SUM OF ALL FEARS

■ £34.99 | Pub: Ubi Soft | Dev: Red Storm | ETA: August 9 | <http://sumofallfears.ubi.com>

**REQUIRES** PII 450, 128Mb RAM and a 16Mb 3D card **DESIRES** PIII 600 and a 32Mb 3D card will be much more acceptable

**Is it a badly used licence or a tense tactical shooter? Richie Shoemaker gets kitted up in order to find out**

**APPARENTLY** you are all stupid thicko twonkers who can't even tie up your own shoelaces. Yes I am talking to you, at least I am if you wear trainers fastened with Velcro. Or if you are one of those poor individuals who played *Rainbow Six*, *Rogue Spear* or *Ghost Recon* and found it so hard you wet yourself and ran home crying to mummy. Whether you couldn't take the realism, or

didn't have the forethought to plan your attacks properly, the fact is that you obviously need help when it comes to more thoughtful first-person action games. And so *The Sum Of All Fears* is the answer to your prayers. Apparently.

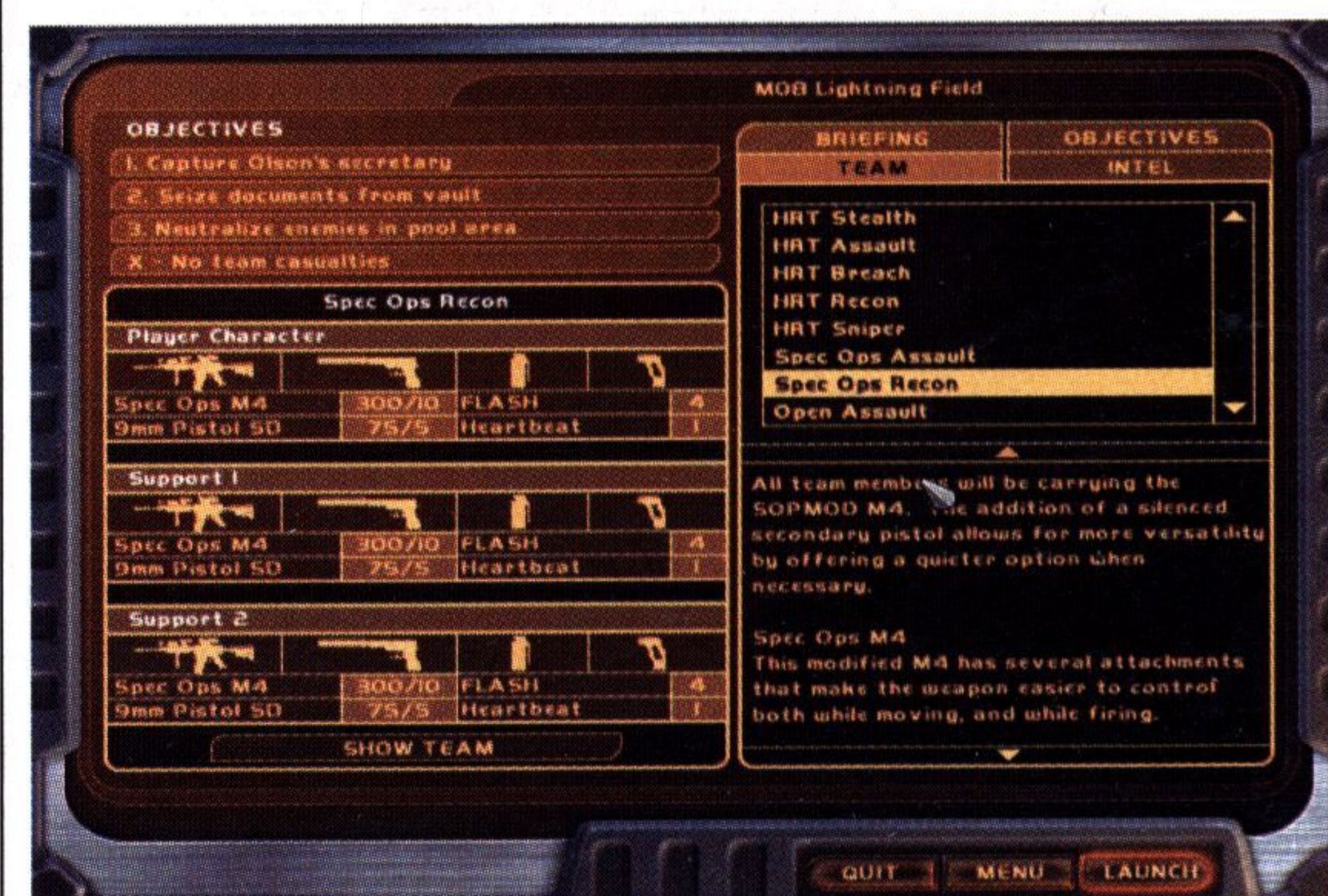
Though it doesn't actually say so on the box, *The Sum Of All Fears* is what Gerald Ratner might call 'Rainbow Six for retards'. As with the game that

or a very good thing, depending on your point of view.

## BLINK AND YOU'LL MISS IT

Of course by electing to gloss over the tactical part of the game that made *Rainbow Six* so popular, Red Storm is hoping that *Fears* will be far more accessible to the unwashed masses. Going a step further, Red Storm has created an easy

## UNLOCK AND LOAD



It goes without saying that *The Sum Of All Fears* has a fine spread of weaponry for you to make use of, but while in their previous games you could select weaponry, ammo and uniforms for each of your team, here you can only select kits – 'assault kit' for example, or 'stealth kit'. It's actually a feature that works quite well, allowing impatient types to get to the action quickly with the minimum of fuss. More kits are unlocked as you make your way through the 11 missions, with extras appearing if you manage to complete a mission without losing any men. It's the sort of feature console gamers love, but we imagine most PC players are indifferent to such things.

## INPERSPECTIVE

### GHOST RECON COLLECTORS PACK

Reviewed Issue 117, Score 88%

The most recent Red Storm game before *Fears*, together with its expansion pack *Desert Siege*. Essential for fans of the genre.

### ROGUE SPEAR: BLACK THORN

Reviewed Issue 110, Score 81%

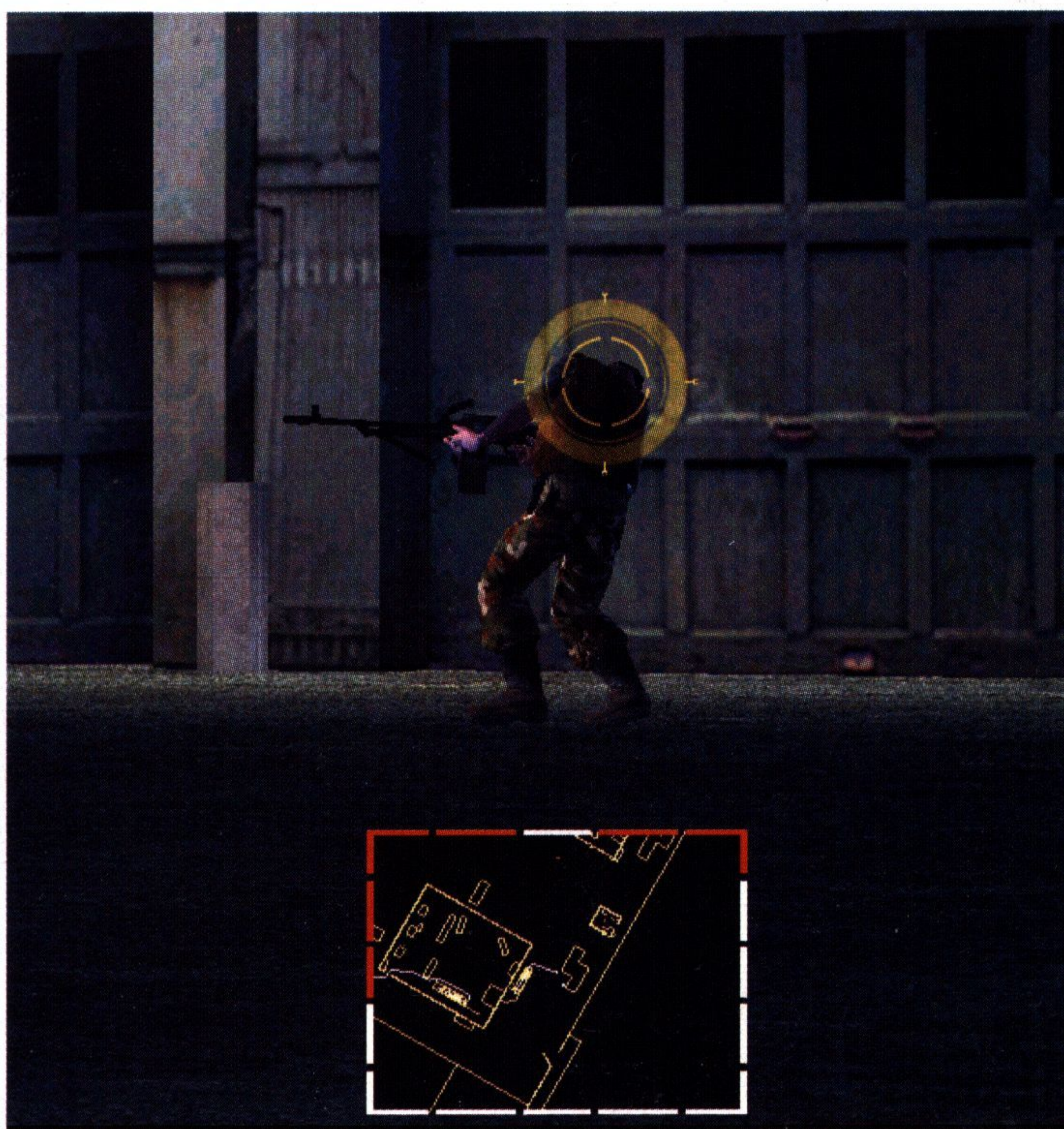
A superior and slightly more hardcore game with some seriously difficult AI. Well worth a look despite the dated graphics.

## "The story is presented in the most dreary way imaginable"

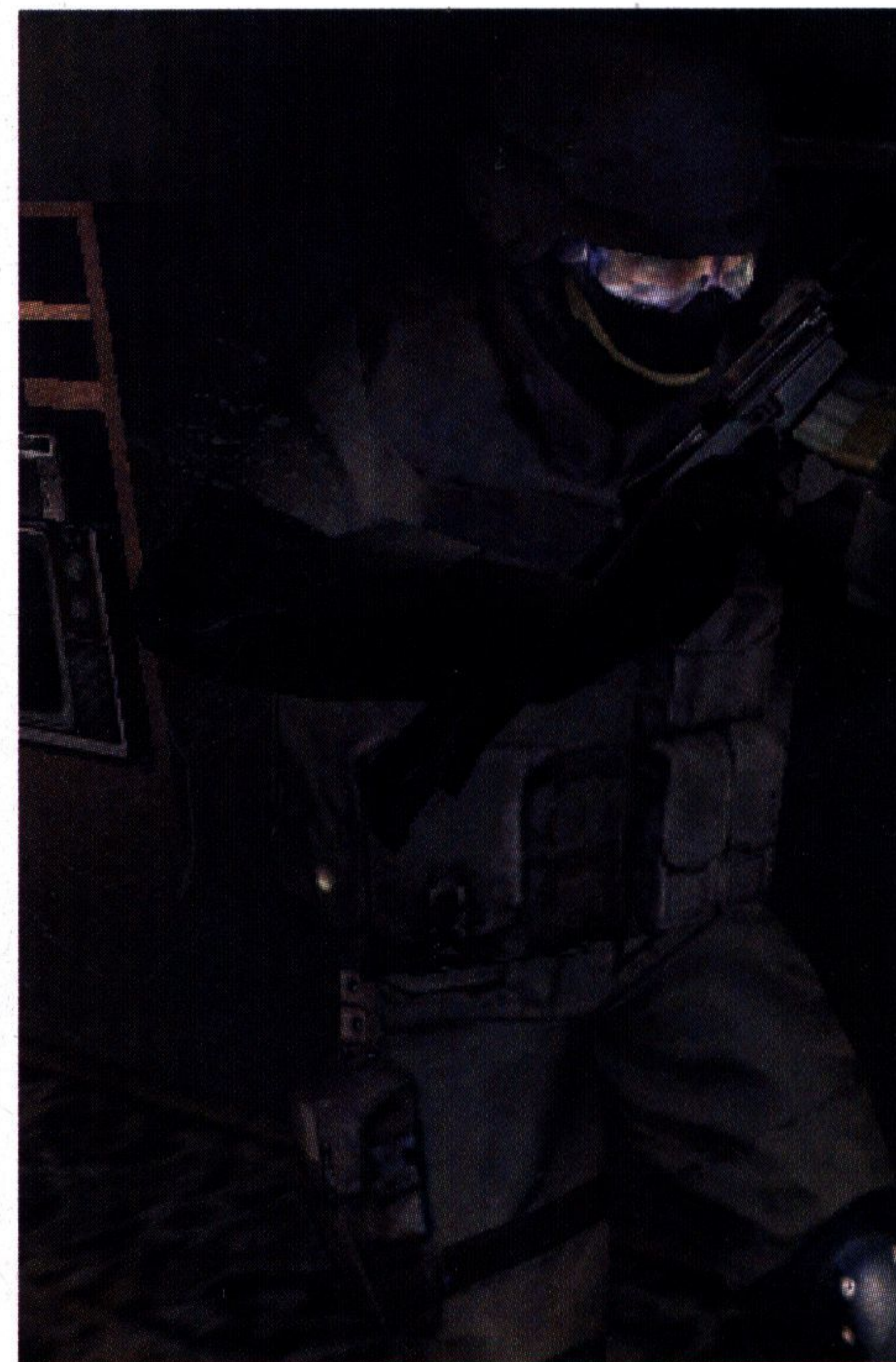
first put developer Red Storm Entertainment on the gaming map, you get to command and control a squad of highly trained counter-terrorists out to thwart the dastardly plans of a bunch of bad guys. Unlike *Rainbow Six* however, you don't actually get to plan the missions yourself, which is either a very bad thing

game mode which is so effortless you can buy the game in the morning and complete it before the ink on the receipt has dried. By default you have full auto-targeting, which means you just click the mouse button when you see an enemy and he will keel over. You also have a map at the bottom of the screen, with





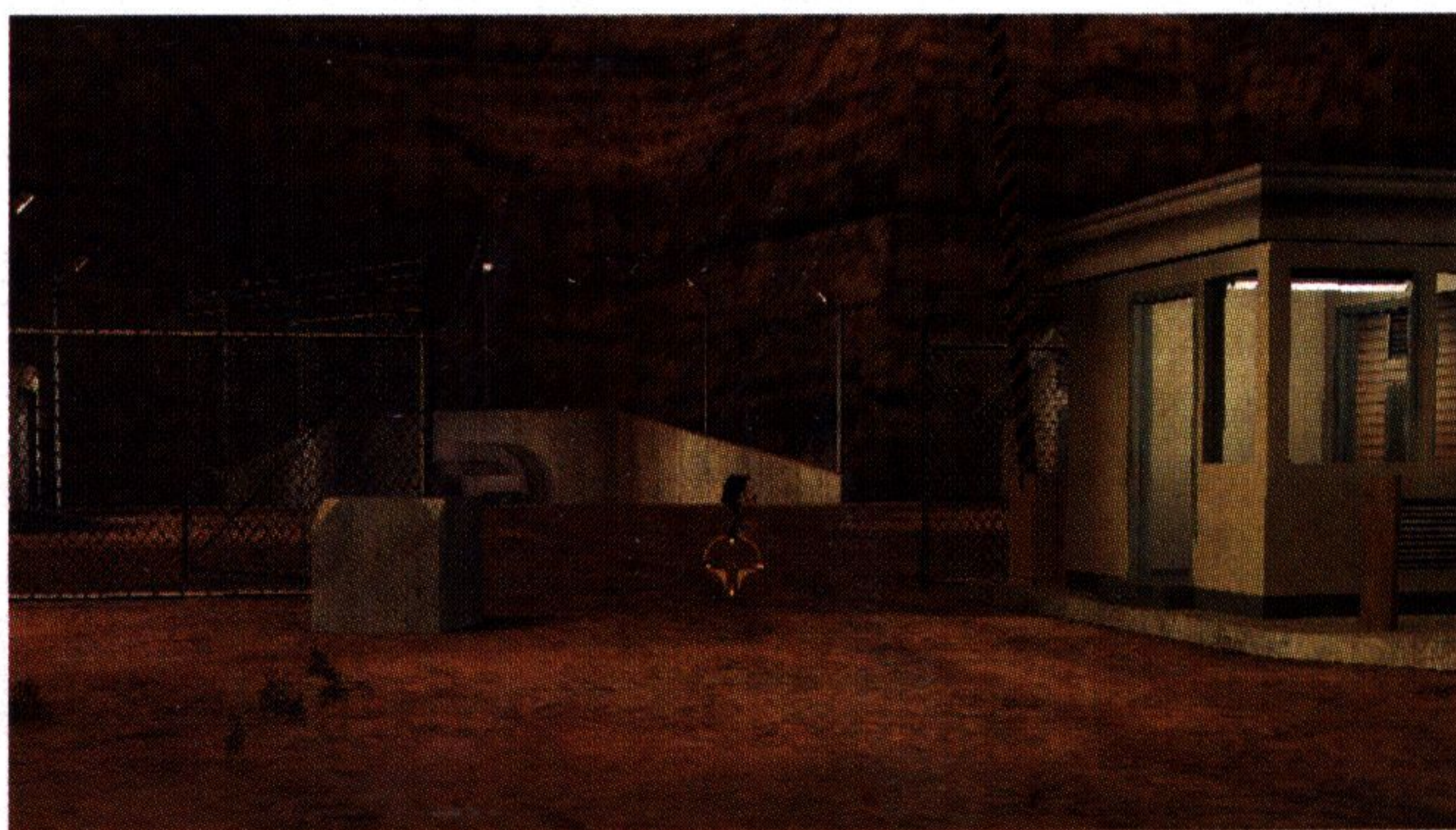
Playing on the easiest difficulty setting is verging on the patronising.



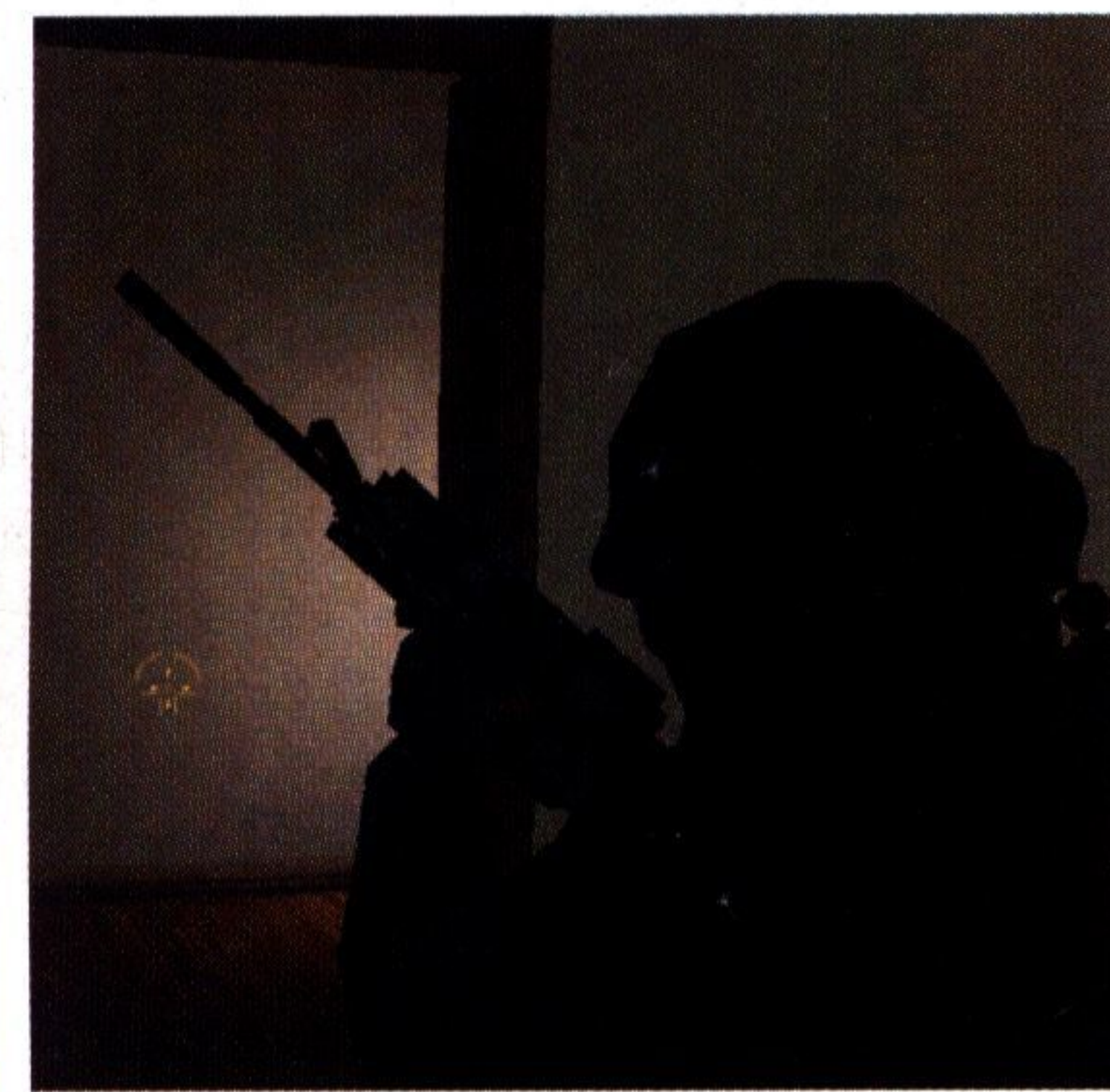
You bloody little SWAT you.



Claustrophobic corridors increase the tension.



Stealth is essential if your small team of specialists are to survive unharmed.



a handy white line telling you in which direction you should press the key to go forward and red dots telling you where all the enemies are. The only feature missing is the flashing warnings telling you when to breathe.

#### CARDBOARD CUT-OUTS

Thankfully you can switch these options off, and for those who breezed through *Ghost Recon*, there is enough of a challenge to be had – one that will last much longer than the four hours needed to complete the game on easy mode. The enemy AI is perfectly acceptable, if somewhat static, and while that of your computer-controlled colleagues is enough to get through the game in easy mode, on the harder levels they are next to useless and little more than extra lives that happen to follow you around. You can give them orders of course, but aside from

opening doors there isn't much they can do. Ask them to grenade a room and while one pulls the pin, the other fails to offer covering fire, meaning you lose a life. Certainly the game lacks the tactical subtleties of even *Ghost Recon* and while it shares the same 3D engine, it

doesn't look quite as impressive. Significantly, this is down to the more urban setting of *Fears'* indoor environments, something that the *Ghost* engine was never particularly good at portraying compared to the lush outdoor levels that characterised both *Ghost Recon* and its excellent add-on *Desert Siege*. The outdoor levels are, as you would expect, quite lovely, but inside the buildings – though *Fears* packs in more detail than *Ghost Recon* – the backdrops, rooms and objects all look as though they are made of cardboard – and more like cheap film sets ironically enough, than realistic buildings.

Like its more illustrious predecessors, *The Sum Of All Fears* is entirely linear, unsurprising since it is directly related to the Tom Clancy book and film of the same name. That in itself

is no bad thing, but if you were expecting *Fears* to be the next step up the evolutionary ladder for tactical shooters you are sure to be mightily disappointed. In terms of originality, the game offers nothing and despite being based on a bestselling thriller, the story is presented in the most dreary way imaginable. You would at least expect some FMV culled from the movie, but what you in fact get are poorly directed in-engine cut-scenes and pre-mission voiceovers that are so deadpan you'll end up ignoring them.

#### LIGHTWEIGHT THINKER

But whether you like your games hardcore or lightweight, we can all agree we prefer them to be good. Unfortunately, while *Fears* is a fairly entertaining game, it isn't as polished or as varied as *Ghost Recon*. Both games share the same 3D engine, but while one is a great game in its own right, the other is simply a scaled-down edit, no doubt rushed in order to meet

the deadline of the film release. For fans of the genre *The Sum Of All Fears* is a disappointing and lightweight game, challenging in parts but too short and repetitive to offer any real long-term value. Those of you looking for an easy and accessible way into the genre are catered for far better, but there's no getting away from the fact that all *Fears* is, is a cut-down version of *Rainbow Six* with updated, though far from spectacular graphics. **PCZ**

#### PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Accessible
- ✓ Decent value for money
- ✗ Too easy
- ✗ Lacks proper tactics
- ✗ No variety
- ✗ Hardly a stunner

# 64

A poor man's *Ghost Recon*





Cultural exchanges with Iraq? Oh well...



OK, so it's not the prettiest game in the world.

# SUPERPOWER

■ US\$29.99 | Pub: DreamCatcher Interactive | Dev: Golem Labs | ETA: Out Now (US), UK TBC | [www.dreamcatchergames.com](http://www.dreamcatchergames.com)

**REQUIRES** Any Pentium processor and 64Mb RAM **DESIRES** Truth be told, that'll pretty much do it

**Paul Presley's plans for world domination are made real, or as real as you get in a computer game**

**ARE YOU A** fan of Risk? If yes then skip forward a bit. If no, read on. The only reason you'll want to play *SuperPower* is to take control of blighty's military stockpile and to nuke Paris. Of course it is, any self-respecting Englishman

you'll probably grin and quote lines from *WarGames* as the rest of the world reacts in kind and the nukes start flying across the globe. But once you realise there's no fancy visual payoff, no scenes of mushroom clouds

**"You're supposed to take control of any country on the planet and steer it to success"**

that gets his hands on a global strategy game always goes straight for the irradiated Gallic option. It's some sort of primal instinct we have, along with battering cod and looking surprised when it rains. You'll do it the once, go through the laboriously painstaking process of aiming each warhead at the Eiffel Tower and watching the missiles fly. There'll be a moment of ghoulish satisfaction as they hit then

over the Seine, no charred corpses littering the Champs Elysées, you'll provide an ironic gallic shrug and never play the thing again. Because life's too short and there are *Counter-Strike* sessions to win. That's it for *SuperPower*. End of review. Can I go home now?

**ER, THE RISK PLAYERS?** Hmm? Oh, yes. The Risk fans. Right, well *SuperPower* is everything you ever wanted in a computerised version of the classic board game but have yet to be given by any of the officially licensed products. I got into a lot of trouble many years ago by daring to suggest that the computerised version of the *Game Of Global Conquest*™ wasn't the greatest thing since sliced butter. Long story but I was eventually proved right (as always).

Anyway, *SuperPower* is essentially Risk on a larger, deeper scale. It isn't supposed to be, don't get me wrong. It's supposed to be a realistic real-time global strategy game, based on the most recent world data from US military and CIA databases. It doesn't have any connection to, association with or desire to be linked to Risk. But that's what it is regardless.

## BUSH FIRES

You're supposed to take control of any country on the planet and steer it to success. The game features a very open-ended goal structure that is mainly driven by the player's own parameters. Want to rebuild the Soviet Empire? Go for it. Want to turn Belize into a nuclear power? Give it



Shall we play a game?

your best shot. Want to unite the Muslim world against the West? Well, here you can. *SuperPower* doesn't really tell you what to do, as much as it just gives you a global simulator to play around with. You've got all manner of resources with which to pull off your goals – economic, political, military, espionage and so on. It's all played out on a turn-by-turn basis (except for combat, which is a semi real-time affair), and while it isn't the most graphically rewarding of games, it still manages to drag you in with the sheer weight of authenticity involved.

All it's missing is a multiplayer option, which would have turned *SuperPower* into the perfect computer version of Risk. But

then Risk fans won't be unfamiliar with accusations of lonerism so maybe they won't mind too much after all. **PCZ**

## INPERSPECTIVE

### CIVILISATION III

Reviewed Issue 111, Score 86%

Proving that history lessons can be fun after all, *Civ* provides a larger-scale version of global empire building.

### SIMCITY 3000

Reviewed Issue 74, Score 92%

Contemporary empire building on a smaller scale (the clue's in the name, dummies). Improved sequel should be with us soon.



## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Comprehensive data on every country in the world
- ✓ Plenty to keep you occupied
- ✓ Nukes
- ✗ Sparse presentation
- ✗ Over-complicated interface
- ✗ Limited appeal

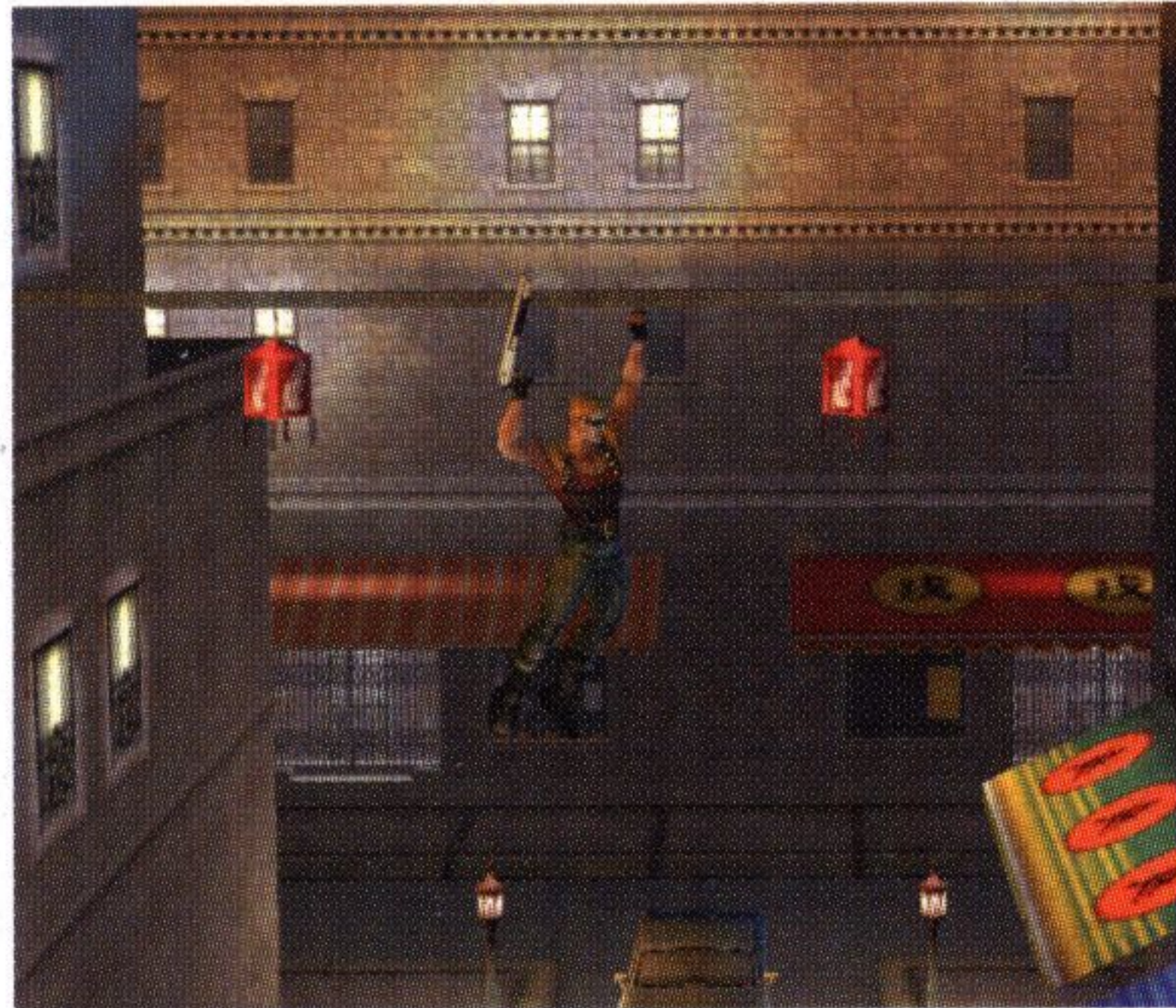
71

**Championship Manager for wannabe world leaders**





Simple puzzles will often hinder Duke's progress.



Will someone please call the exterminator.

# DUKE NUKEM: MANHATTAN PROJECT



■ £19.99 | Pub: ARUSH Games | Dev: ARUSH | ETA: June 14 | [www.arushgames.com](http://www.arushgames.com)

REQUIRES PIII 350, 64Mb RAM and a 3D card DESIRES PIII 500 and 128Mb RAM

**James Lyon** wanted to review the new *Duke Nukem* game. We were happy to oblige...

**AND THERE** was me thinking it was my birthday or something when I pulled this out of the padded envelope. Until I noticed the suffix that is. The danger that 3D Realms faces in agreeing to push out this small franchise canapé while they work tirelessly on the main course is considerable, as there's a chance of spoiling the player's appetite altogether with a lacklustre game instead of whipping up a frenzy of excitement. Less of the extended metaphors, though. What does this one do?

## ALWAYS WITH THE SEWERS

It's ostensibly a 2D horizontal platform game working in a

3D engine, Duke Nukem is restricted to either going left or right, with the camera swinging around on rails if he should ever turn a pre-set corner. Think back to games such as *Pandemonium* or *Klonoa* on the PlayStation and you'll get the idea. Which also means it can often feel a little frustrating, having to find an alternative way to get past objects despite there being a huge gap just two feet away, or running past an enemy mutant on a different level and having no chance to shoot him there and then. It may not betray the constrictions it sets itself but it doesn't have to go out of its way to tease the player that this isn't *Duke Nukem Forever*.

## "The misogynist hulk comes replete with a vast array of wisecracks"

Even if we're going to judge it on its platform game merits, it doesn't fare as well as it should. For starters, the levels are full of clichés: exploding barrels, sewers and keycards. It's for the best that the game at



You wouldn't shoot a woman would you?

least manages to attain a similar atmosphere to *Duke Nukem 3D*. The misogynist hulk comes replete with an array of wisecracks and an abandonment of any form of political correctness

sex-wise. Take that away and it's just a bog-standard platformer with flashy 3D effects and eight three-part levels of depressingly drab scenery that would have looked tired in *Manic Miner*'s day.

## CLAUSTROPHOBIA

The camera sometimes feels a little too close to the action making it difficult to plan ahead or see where the next enemy is coming from. In such a case, there's little scope for manoeuvrability anyway. Most encounters seem to end up in a straight forward stand-off, with Duke standing still and firing at the mutants before picking up one of the abundance of health packs. It's not even worth trying to avoid the enemies, as this method of mindless firing is far simpler to use.

Duke also seems a little sluggish in his movements,

lacking that extra little bit of athleticism that provides you with a slicker playing experience. And it's a little easy with auto-save points generously provided throughout the levels. Though I did get stuck a small number of times in later levels the game's pretty straightforward, letting you know which way to go.

There you go, then. It's fun for a day or so but it's not really what we want, is it? Load up *Duke Nukem 3D* again and keep your fingers crossed that *Forever* sees the light of day before the sun starts to burn out. **PCZ**

## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Babes, guns and pig cops – it's Duke alright
- ✓ Mildly impressive 3D visuals
- ✗ All too familiar platforming components
- ✗ Manoeuvring feels a little off
- ✗ No real tactics
- ✗ It's not *Duke Nukem Forever*

# 52

Wholly unsatisfying

## INPERSPECTIVE

### SOUL REAVER 2

Reviewed Issue 111, Score 86%

A hugely enjoyable vampire action/adventure with an immersive and twist-ridden storyline, and an excellent combat system.

### ABE'S ODYSSEY

Reviewed Issue 71, Score 77%

Probably the last good platform game on the PC. The endearing characters and action puzzles made it an entertaining, albeit a frustrating, experience.





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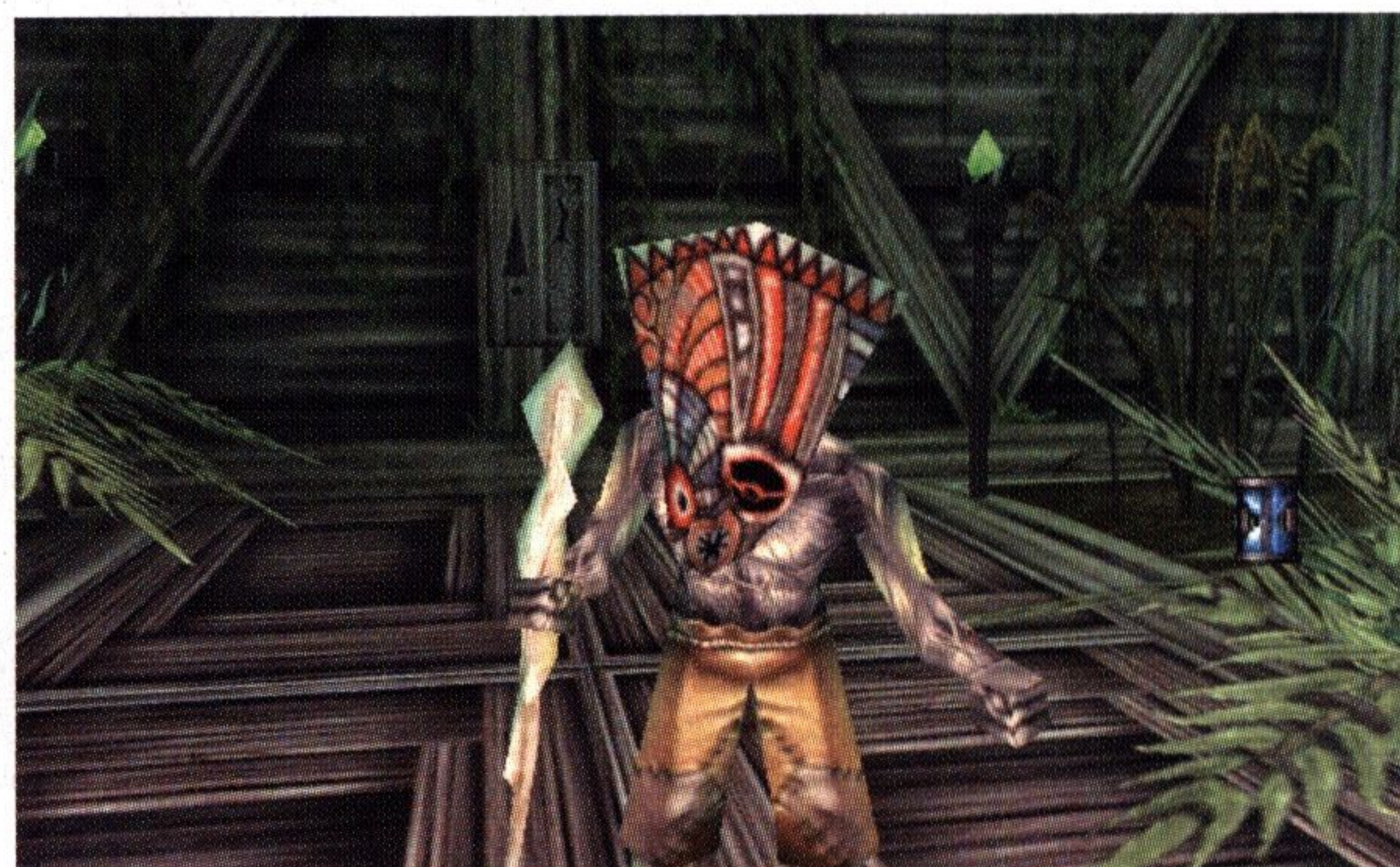
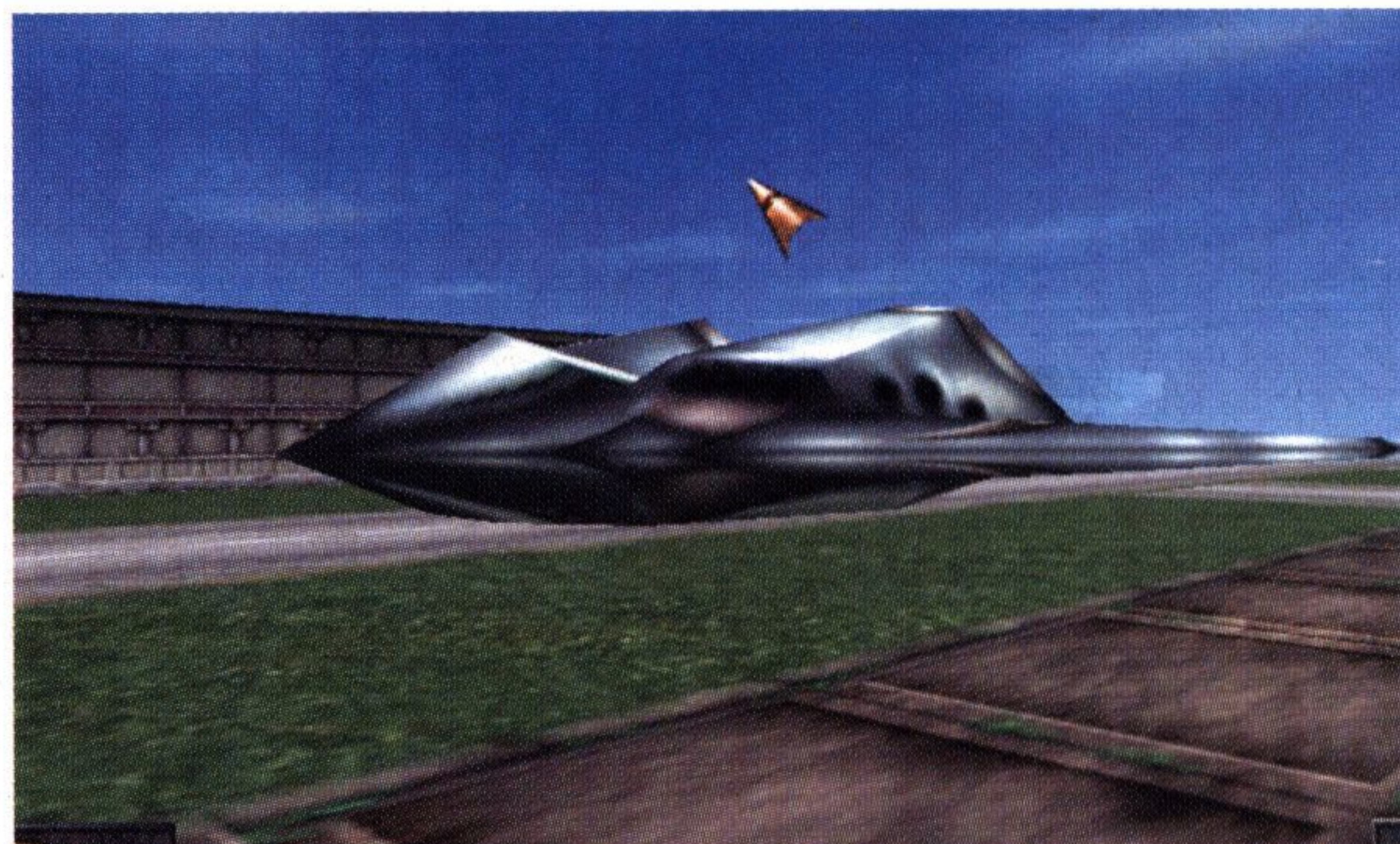
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Play it turn-based if you don't want to die.



This shaman bloke has a lot to do with the missing artefact.

# WIZARDRY 8

■ £29.99 | Pub: Sirtech | Dev: Sirtech | ETA: Out Now | [www.wizardry8.com](http://www.wizardry8.com)

REQUIRES P233, 64Mb RAM and an 8Mb 3D card DESIRES PII 400, 128Mb RAM and a 16Mb 3D card

It's raining RPGs lately. We haven't heard **Chris Anderson** complaining though



**THERE HAS** to be some sort of conspiracy going on in the game development community. Having consistently pushed a host of drab, dull and formulaic RPGs upon us, they seem to have made a pact to 'get better' and the end result is the arrival of several high quality RPGs – *The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind* and *Dungeon Siege* being the two most notable examples. *Wizardry 8*, it has to be said, follows the trend in fine style by delivering a huge, detailed world with complex NPC interaction and a colourful, attractive graphical style that won't win any awards but is still well above average for a role-playing game.

## BRANCHING OUT

The plot is a predictable one; an important artefact is lost, and obviously, you're the one who has to find it. It's a dull concept, but it's carried off with considerable style: many NPCs you meet have a lot to say about the main storyline (this in itself makes it more interesting) and you can quiz them about it through the use of branching conversational trees. There's nothing here that hasn't been done before, but whereas many titles simply throw together a few tried and tested RPG

ingredients along with some nice graphics in order to make up for a lack of depth, *Wizardry 8* has all the ingredients of an engrossing RPG, and they blend together seamlessly to make for a hugely playable game. Of course, it has its faults...

## THEY'RE JOKING, RIGHT?

Combat can be played out in real-time if you want to die, or in turn-based mode if you want to stay alive. This system works well despite an unnecessarily cumbersome magic interface (it's not as easy to display and access each character's spells as it could be) but the introduction of modern



You can sort inventory items by type, which is nice.

weapons for some classes make up for this (don't ask, there are even space ships involved somewhere along the line). This is not a problem in itself, but the toughness of the random creatures you meet along the way, most certainly are. It's not uncommon to come across enemies that are way beyond your level in the wilderness, and you know before combat even starts that you are going to have to revert to a previous save at the end of it. This is the only real downer on an otherwise highly polished and immensely playable RPG. It's not quite *Morrowind*, but you can't hang it for that. **PC7**

## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Hugely addictive
- ✓ Combines fantasy and futuristic elements
- ✓ Complex NPC interaction
- ✗ Unpredictable difficulty levels on random encounters
- ✗ Cumbersome magic interface

# 84

An excellent addition to a rapidly improving genre

## INPERSPECTIVE

### THE ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

Reviewed Issue 117, Score 94%

If you like the attention to detail in *Wizardry 8*, you will love *Morrowind*. It's bigger and better in just about every way.

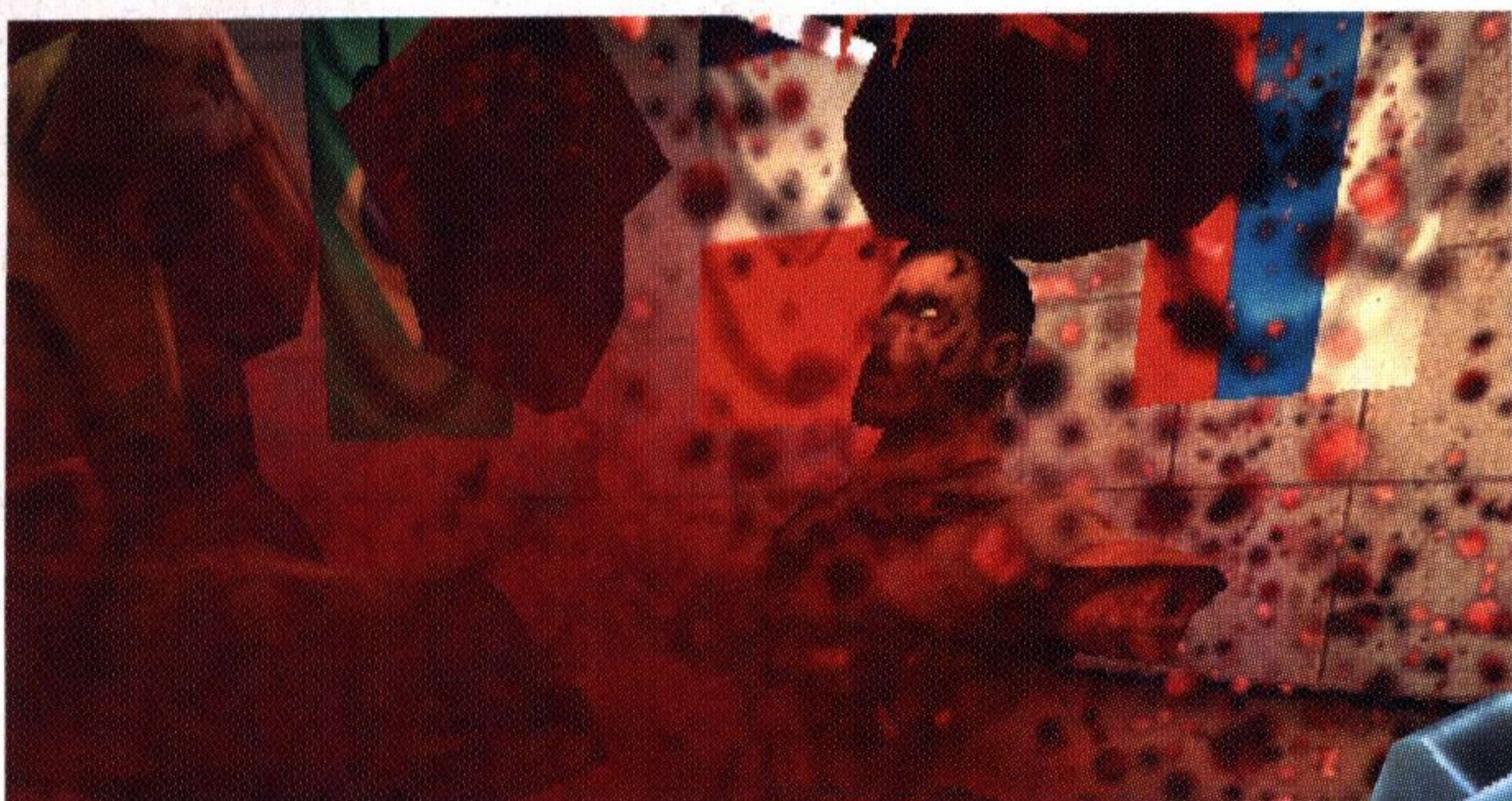
### ARCANUM

Reviewed Issue 106, Score 84%

*Arcanum* also revolves around the idea of combining futuristic and magic elements, and it's even more stat heavy than *Wizardry 8*.







As the name suggests, there's plenty of gore.



The enemies are as numerous as they are varied.



# GORE

■ £34.99 | Pub: Mindscape | Dev: 4D Rulers | ETA: Out July | [www.4drulers.com](http://www.4drulers.com)

**REQUIRES** PII 400, 32Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card **DESIRES** Works better on a PII 600 with 128Mb RAM. Above that is overkill

**Richie Shoemaker draws blood with a game a few years past its sell-by date**

**FIVE YEARS** in the making and it's finally finished. It's been a long time, far too long, especially when you end up with a game that was destined for obscurity the longer development went on. But then I'm quite sure that until now few of you will have heard of *Gore*, let alone been aware of its protracted development. It could have taken half that time and probably should have.

As first-person shooters go, *Gore* is a blueprint for mediocrity, in fairness, because quite simply there are so many others on the market offering much the same gameplay, either better or cheaper. Compared to *Quake III Arena*, now more than two years old, *Gore* doesn't even come close. Add in the myriad of free



Arrrrrrrrgh. That really smarts.

mods and it becomes even harder to justify *Gore*'s sorry existence.

## FAST AND FURIOUS

But we shouldn't blame the developers. Their aim, to provide a fast, simple and fun multiplayer

baked sub-SiN-standard single-player game tacked on, it seems dated and more than a little half-baked. Playable but instantly forgettable.

## HERMAN GORING

As for the gore itself, there's a fair amount of it. Red mist and body parts are a common graphical occurrence, but the 3D mess isn't a patch even on the original *Soldier Of Fortune*. Even plunging a chainsaw into an enemy's torso doesn't illicit much in the way of blood custard.

In its favour there are plenty of satisfying weapons; twin-Uzis, a flamethrower that's almost as good as the one in *Castle Wolfenstein* and a shotgun that doubles up as a riot shield. Each character also has specialist skills



If weapons run out you'll have to resort to hand-to-hand combat.

**"Ultimately, just being different isn't good enough in FPS-land"**

## INPERSPECTIVE

### QUAKE III ARENA

Reviewed Issue 87, Score 89%

The purest and most enjoyable deathmatch game there is, despite its age.

### DAIKATANA

Reviewed Issue 91, Score 53%

Another over-egged pudding – now available for a fiver.

fragfest, has been realised. As a multiplayer game, which is what *Gore* was intended solely to be, it is fairly enjoyable; fast, fun and with plenty of small nuggets of originality. Had it been released a year ago, at the budget price of £20, as a multiplayer-only game, we might have been a little more taken with it. Today, at nearly twice the price, with a half-

and weapons, lending the game a beat 'em up aesthetic that perhaps should have been taken further.

As you would expect, the maps are a mixture of the good, bad and ugly, with references from *Evil Dead* to *Kingpin*. The action is fast and frantic, and many of the maps are tight enough to provide for plenty of kills.

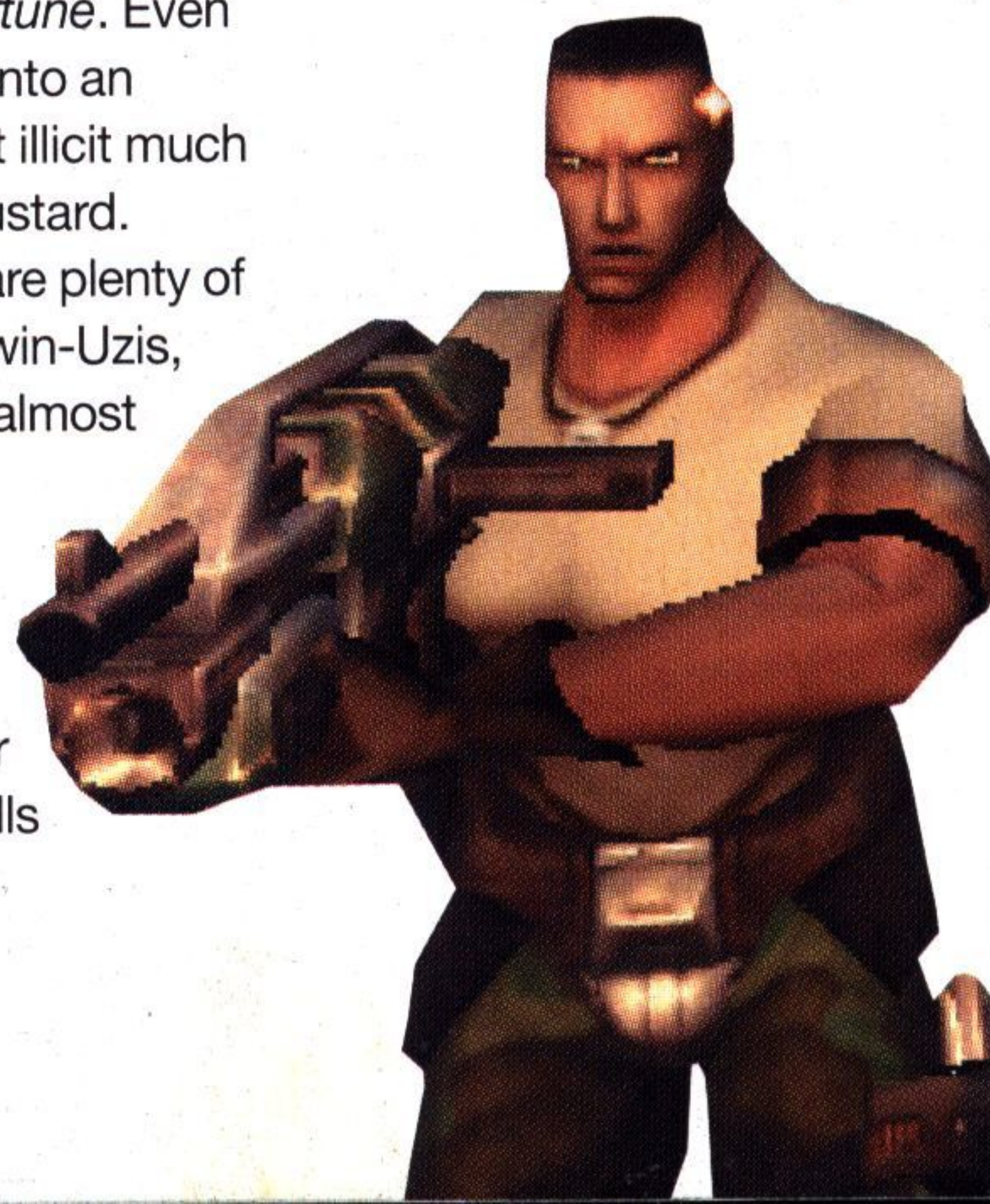
Ultimately though, just being different isn't good enough in FPS-land and that is all *Gore* is – a slight, almost unnoticeable twist on the *Quake* concept that is neither as good to look at or as enjoyable to play. **PCW**

## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Some original touches
- ✓ Uncomplicated
- ✓ Enjoyable deathmatch mode
- ✗ Dated
- ✗ Insipid
- ✗ Expensive

# 50

The standard by which all average games will be judged





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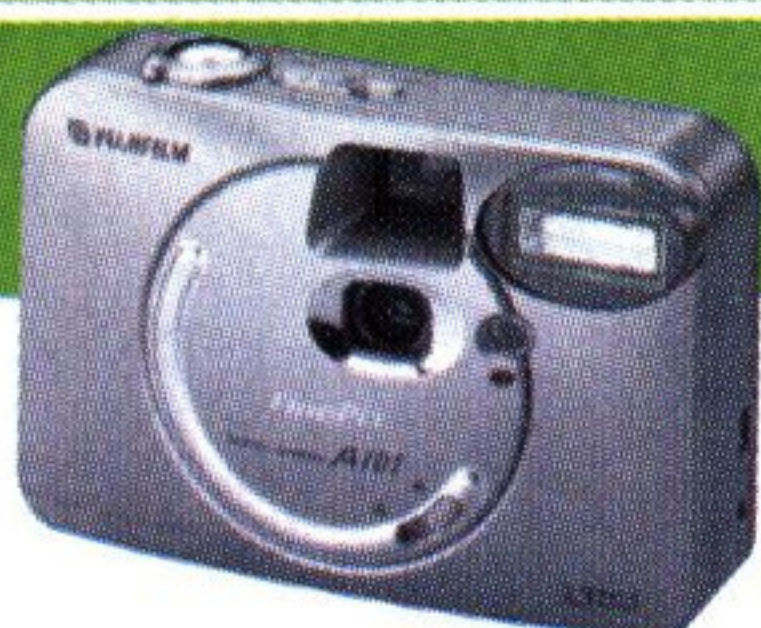


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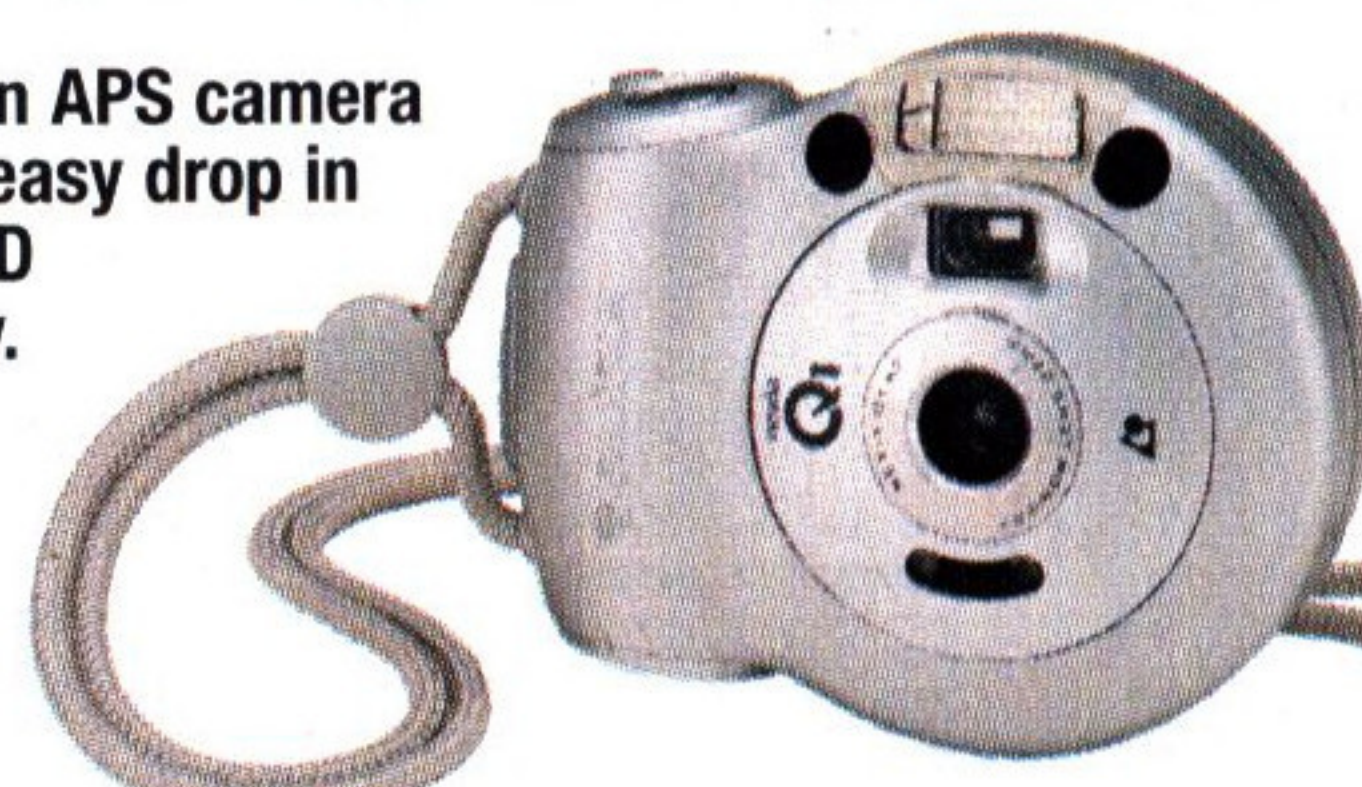
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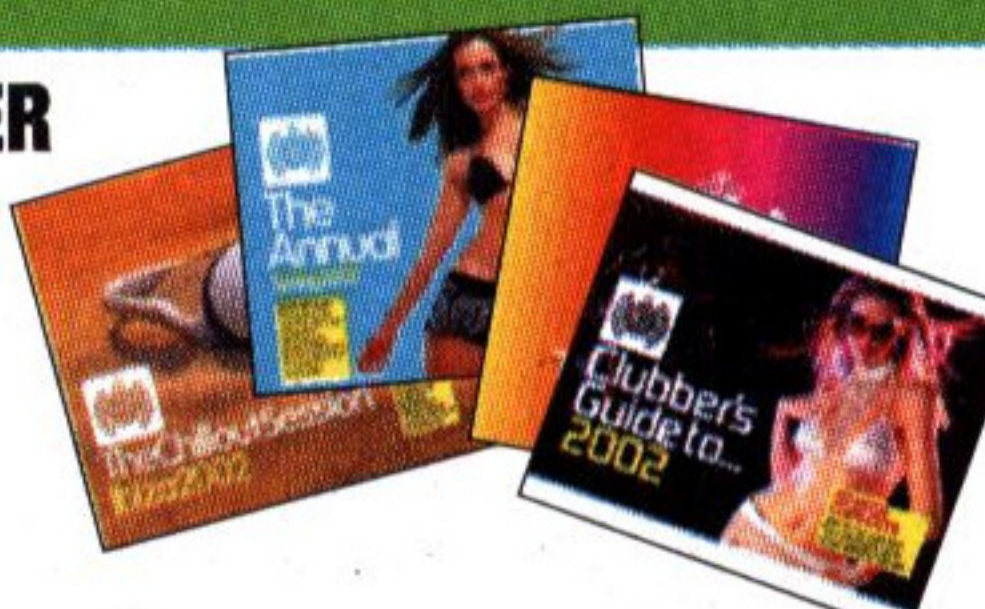
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A no-brainer but it does provide simple honest fun.

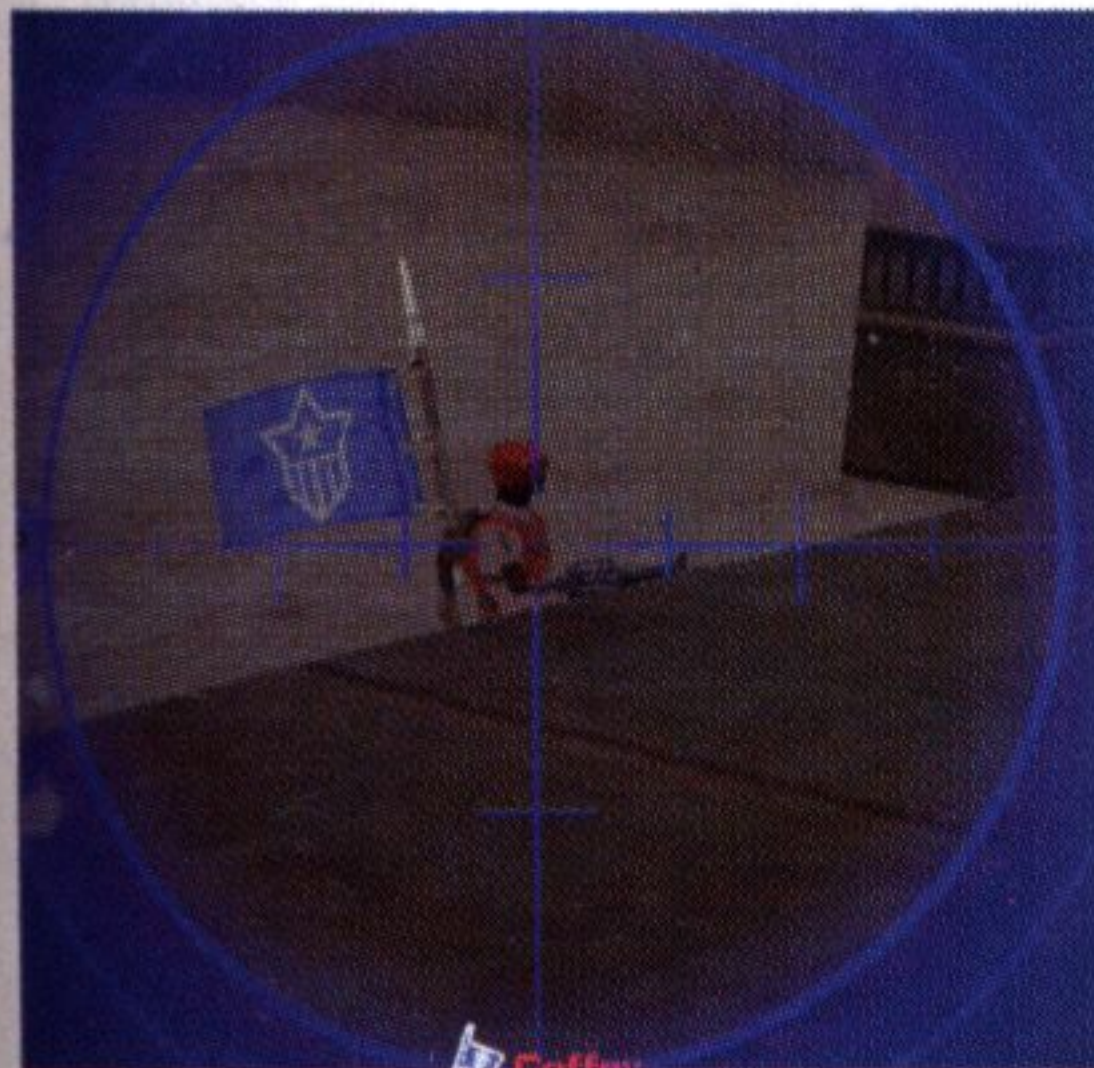


Driving vehicles and shooting people all in one package. Lucky us.

**AS A REGULAR**

PC gamer, the chances are you enjoy shooting people in the face and driving military vehicles. Imagine if there was a game that enabled you to do both of these things, while remaining playable, looking passable, and costing no more than half a gram of pharmaceutical grade cocaine. *Mobile Forces* is of course that game, and arrives with little fanfare, few pretensions, and a great deal to recommend it.

First-person shooters have gone through numerous stages of development over the years, with the current trend being to create overblown cinematic epics, replete with fleshed out characters and elaborate plot-lines. *Mobile Forces* turns that on its head, and the story doesn't seem to extend any further than 'you are sat at home on your own playing another violent computer game'. But that's good enough, as it's



Death comes swiftly and often.

**INPERSPECTIVE****UNREAL TOURNAMENT**

Reviewed Issue 81 Score 90%  
Basically the template for *Mobile Forces*, but without vehicles.

**STEALTH COMBAT**

Reviewed Issue 117  
Score 57%  
Plenty of vehicles, but a far more sedate pace.

# MOBILE FORCES

■ £24.99 (Includes two months free trial with ThrustWorld) | Pub: Rage |  
Dev: Real Time Worlds Ltd | ETA: May 31 | [www.mobileforces.com](http://www.mobileforces.com)

**REQUIRES** PII 450, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card **DESIRES** PIII 600 will make the game run smoothly

**Steve Hill gets mobile for some military action**



You can play against bots but like all multiplayer games it's much better online.

simply fast, solid, crude action. If it was a film, it would be an unlabelled porn video.

**TRAILER TRASH**

Unashamedly multiplayer, gameplay requires you to do little more than load up on guns and kill your friends. If you don't have any friends (or a LAN), you can of course play online against acne-ridden virgins, and if you don't fancy hammering your phone bill, some reasonably adequate bots will tend to your every need. All the multiplayer staples are present and correct, including DeathMatch and Capture The

Flag, as well as more specific vehicle-based efforts such as Trailer (which involves finding and securing a trailer). In a vague concession to reality, some subtlety is introduced in the weapons selection screen that precedes each mission. Whereas FPS characters are generally able to leap about carrying nine weapons and a ton of ammunition, tools have to be picked carefully here as only a few slots are available. Carrying the maximum amount of armoury will actually slow you down, and while it's not exactly *Deus Ex*, it causes you to think for at least a second. The usual array of weapons is offered,

including knife, shotgun, sniper rifle, and even a tripod mounted heavy machine gun, ideal for protecting a designated target.

Thankfully, the vehicles work a lot better here than they did in *Counter-Strike*.**ALL MOD CONS**

Because it uses the *Unreal* engine, it would be easy to dismiss *Mobile Forces* as little better than a glorified mod, but the inclusion of vehicles lifts it out of the mire of the amateur scene. As well as driving the various Dune Buggys, Humvees and Armoured Personnel Carriers,

Further maps will follow, along with a Mental Racing mod that will turn the game into a racing game with rockets. *Mobile Forces* also ships with an editor, and it seems that the enthusiasm or otherwise of the mod scene could make all the difference. As it stands though, this is simple, instant fun. **PCZ**

**"If it was a film, it would be an unlabelled porn video"**

you can also ride shotgun (sometimes literally) while a squad member takes the wheel, enabling you to execute some impressive drive-by shootings. Enemies can also be crushed beneath the wheels, and there's a reasonable mix of driving and shooting.

The maps are fairly elaborate affairs – Warehouse, Wild West, Carpark, Airport etc – with several shortcuts offering an advantage in many of the games.

**PCZONE VERDICT**

- ✓ Eight different game modes
- ✓ Instantly accessible
- ✗ Somewhat dated
- ✗ Occasionally ropey AI

# 75

**Cheap and cheerful**





There's no satisfaction to be had from getting a kill.

# TEAM FACTOR

■ £29.99 | Pub: Singularity Software | Dev: 7FX | ETA: Out now | [www.teamfactor.co.uk](http://www.teamfactor.co.uk)

**REQUIRES** PIII 500, 128Mb RAM and a 16Mb 3D card **DESIRES** P4 1.8GHz, 256Mb RAM and a 64Mb 3D card if you're going to have more than five bots or host games

**There's no 'i' in team but, as Mark Hill finds out, there are three in 'disappointing'**

**IT'S NO** use pretending. No matter how much developers – of *Global Ops* as much as of this – keep telling us that they're not trying to take the *Counter-Strike* crown, that they're in fact doing something very different, much more tactical and much more realistic, it's against *Counter-Strike* that such games must be judged.

There's no point arguing that a slower-type of gameplay, a few different options and a greater emphasis on strategy will make all the difference. It won't. *Quake III* deathmatch or *Wolfenstein's* multiplayer mode provide a very different experience for online gamers who don't want to play CS. Games such as *Global Ops* or *Team Factor* all have CS-

style maps, teams going after an objective, realistic modern weapons and a stealthy sort of gameplay. They're not going to compete with *Counter-Strike* – the most popular online shooter by a vast margin – by doing things a little bit different. They need to do them a bit better too.

## RASPBERRIES

As you may have guessed, *Team Factor* falls way short of that target. The reason for *Counter-Strike's* incredibly enduring popularity is that anyone can play it. It feels realistic while actually being quite arcadey. You move at a reasonable speed, you can jump from crates to the roof of buildings and you generally hit where your crosshairs are aiming. What all

the games that proudly claim more realism – and *Team Factor* is certainly one of them – really do is put you in control of a slow and awkward soldier who can't jump much higher than a pavement and struggles to turn around. In CS the

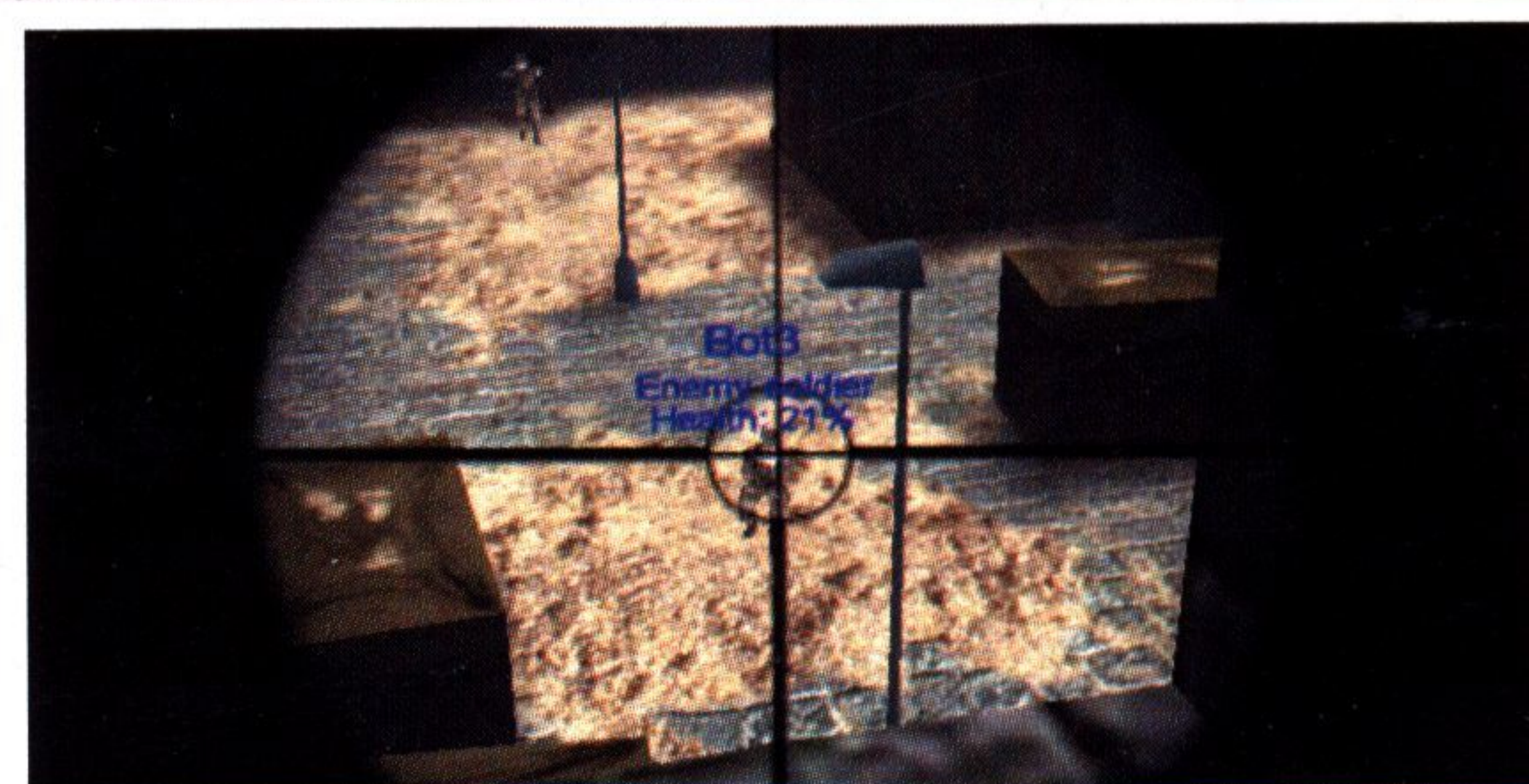
controls and movement might not be realistic, but they feel just right. You forget you're using a keyboard and mouse and just play as if you were running with an AK-47 in your own hands.

In *Team Factor* you are always painfully aware of being stuck in a shabbily designed game. It simply doesn't feel finished. Doing the simplest things becomes a hardship and hitting anything is a random and not entirely perceivable experience. That may be what war is like, but not what a game should be like. To see if you've killed somebody you need to hit the TAB key to check your score, partly because of the lack of feedback and partly because enemy soldiers just melt into the scenery.

This is made all the worse by the sound and feel of your weapons. They look the business and there's certainly an excellent selection of them, but when you fire one you're greeted by a pathetic pt-pt-pt-pt. Like a very

small car trying to start on a cold morning. It's not so much like firing a pellet gun as it is spitting chewed-up paper balls through an empty biro. What should be the horrifying sound of warfare, with shrapnel whistling through

## YOU WANNA ROLEPLAY?



## NO BEARDS, BUT A FEW STAMINA POINTS...

If you play the game with no bots online on the realistic setting, the game introduces some intriguing RPG elements. Depending on how you perform you get to spend points on strength, stamina, stealth, awareness, marksmanship and breath control. The last has nothing to do with evading drink driving offences but means the weapon remains steady after the heavy breathing provoked by running. Since you choose a class at the beginning of the game, it makes sense to develop the skills relevant to that class (marksmanship for snipers, for instance). But the question is whether these RPG elements have any place in this type of game. After all, in CS it's your own skill that counts, not some artificially imposed restrictions on your movements and accuracy. Still it's a nice touch if that's the sort of thing you're after.

## INPERSPECTIVE

### COUNTER-STRIKE

Reviewed Issue 98, Score 93%

Still brilliant after all these years. Forget Wendy's moans in last issue's back page comment, I still play this all the time.

### GLOBAL OPERATIONS

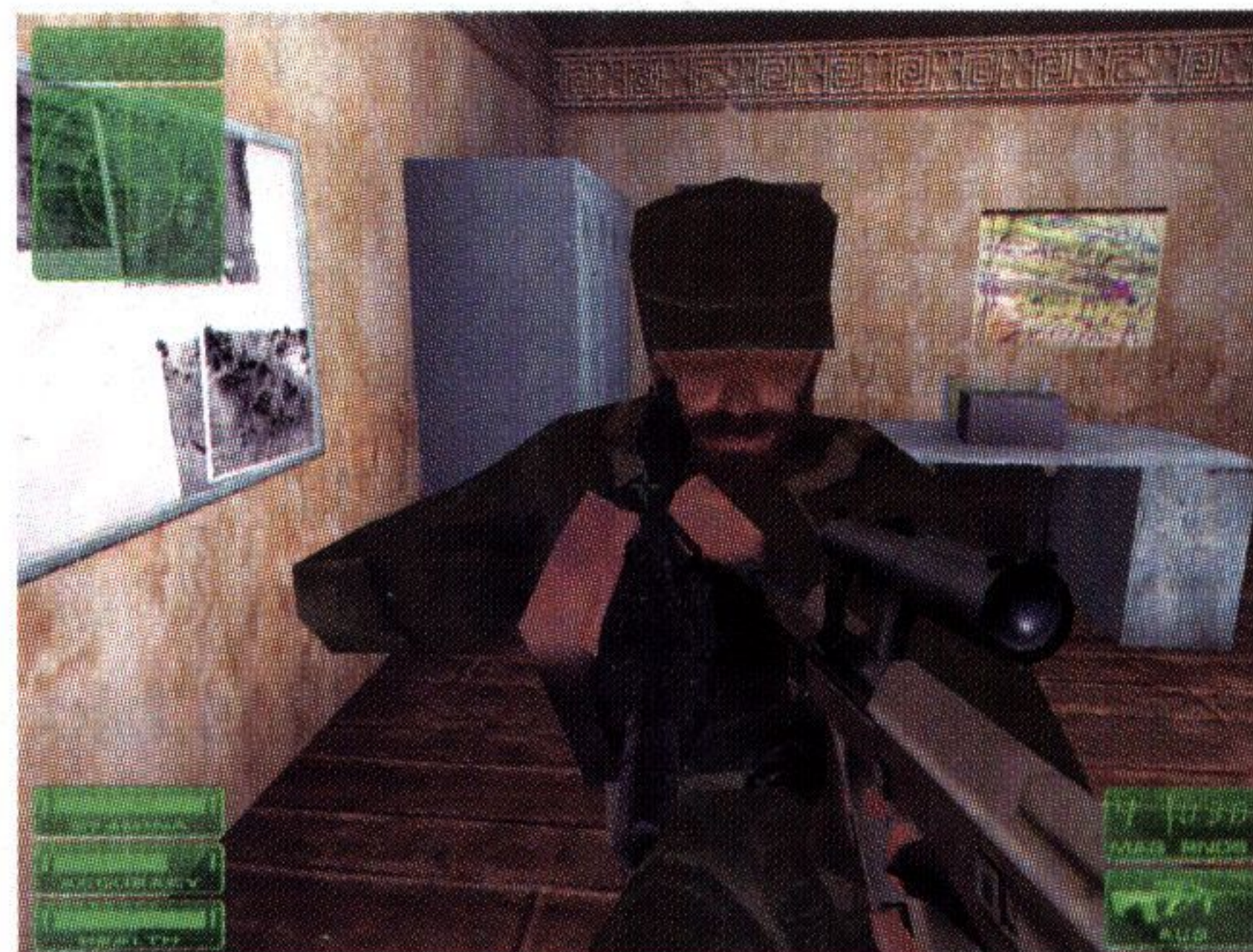
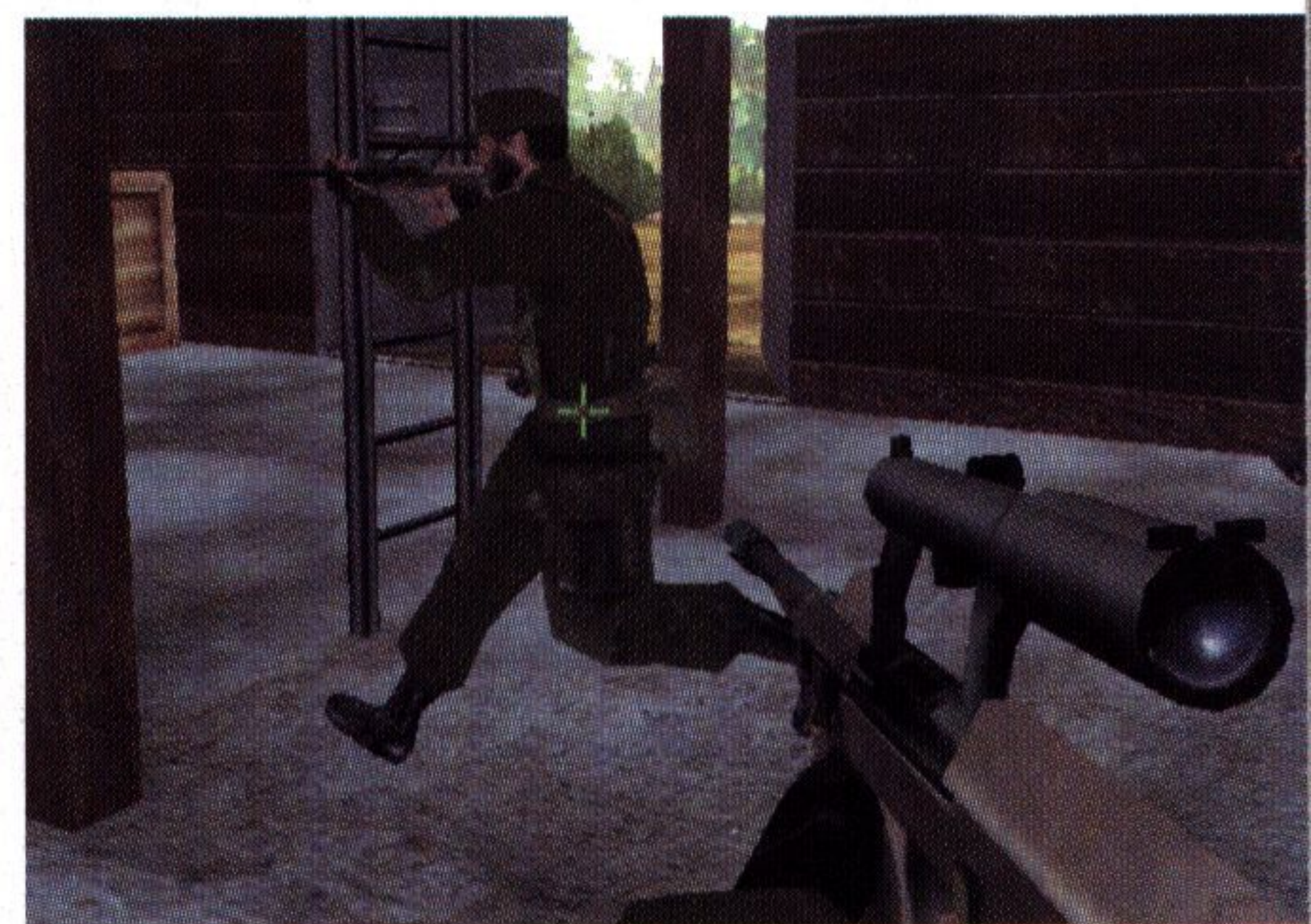
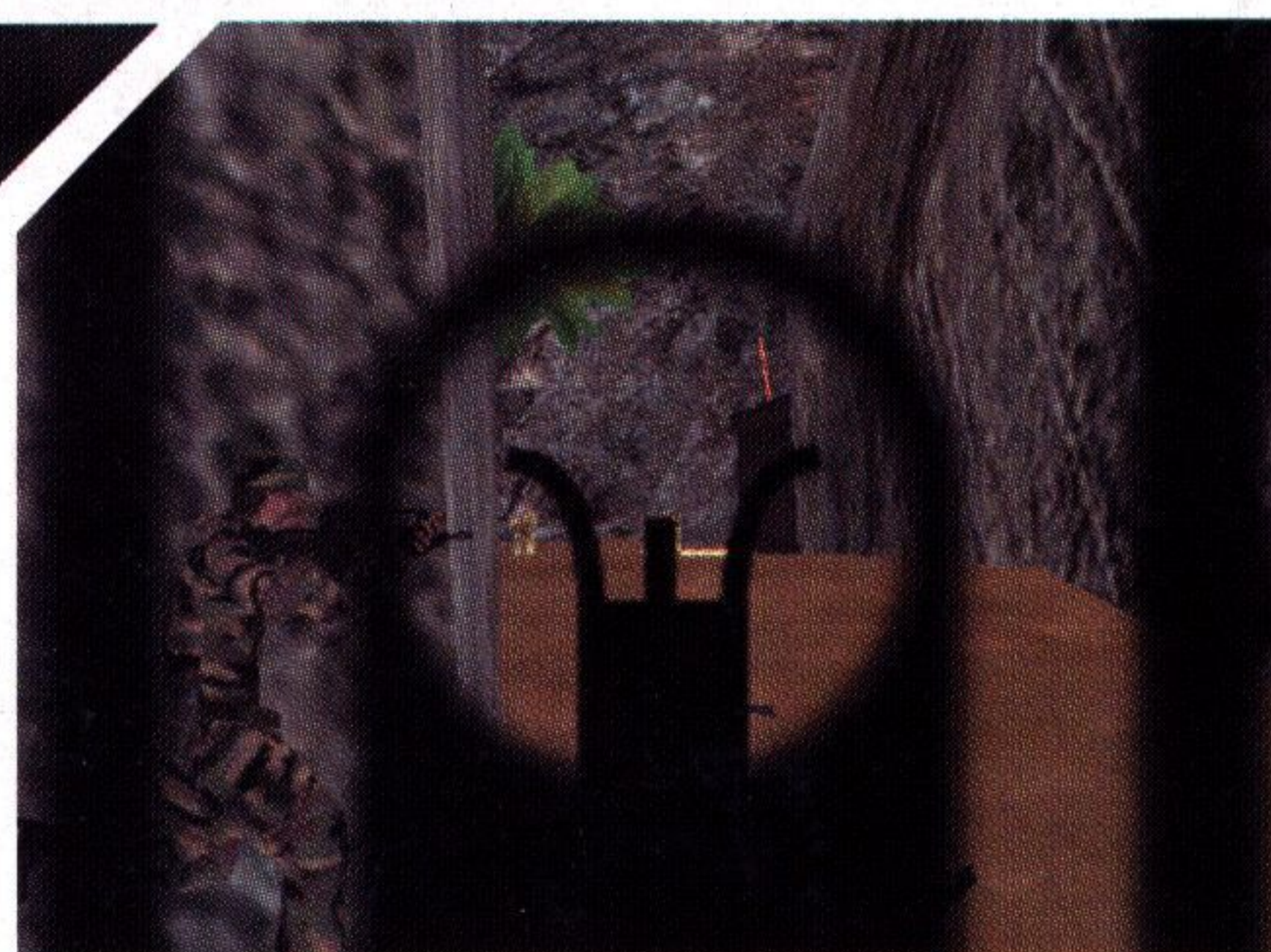
Reviewed Issue 114, Score 78%

A decent alternative with more class choices and some nice ideas. Shame it isn't being played online like it was meant to be.





It's not much to look at, but it's the way it feels that's the problem.



They look hard but move like Dale Winton after a colonic irrigation session.

## "Doing the simplest things becomes a hardship and hitting anything is a random and not entirely perceivable experience"

the air, loud explosions rocking the walls and gunfire ripping your eardrums, turns out to be more like an airfarting competition.

### HUNGRY BOTS

It wouldn't be so bad if it all looked like an *Unreal II* rival, but instead Czech developer 7FX has spent almost two years producing a game that looks worse than CS, which is more than two years old. It's like a

stripped down version of the *Operation Flashpoint* engine (another Czech game and no looker itself). This doesn't work too badly in the wilderness levels, even if it is something of a mess trying to sort out the scenery from anything else. But on the CS-type levels it's a cardboard eyesore. Still, at least you can have a laugh watching other people run, their camp legs hopping about independently

from the rest of their bodies.

You might be wondering then why it needs such a monster of a machine to run on (a P4 1.3GHz at least). This, we're told, is because the AI is very power-hungry, so the more bots you have the higher the specs you need. So they must be good right? Wrong. Rushing around is about all they're good for, rendering the single-player game as much of a waste of space as it was in *Global*

Ops. This is strictly a map-learning mode. The bots are also supposed to fill up teams in online matches, which is rather pointless unless no one expects many people to be playing. What's the point of going online if you're fighting some dumb bots?

### YOU MEAN IT'S NOT FREE?

Still, there are some options to mess around with. Arcade mode is supposed to be a CS sort of game while Realistic removes your crosshair, disables respawns, enables friendly fire and doesn't show you who is friend or foe (as well as adding the RPG bits – see the You Wanna Roleplay panel). Although this makes the game even harder, realism fanatics should enjoy playing this way. However, dying in realistic mode can happen within seconds of starting a level. Mostly thanks to a further novelty, which is that there are three teams competing for an objective instead of the usual two. This throws up some balance

issues (the black team has the best weapons) and means some rounds can be over without you even knowing what's going on.

To actually ask for money for something so below the standard of dozens of free mods is plainly ludicrous. The game is in serious need of patching, and if any decent ones appear, we'll let you know how the game fares in our Updates section. Until then, we'd advise taking a gander at our coverdiscs instead. **[X]**

### PCZONE VERDICT

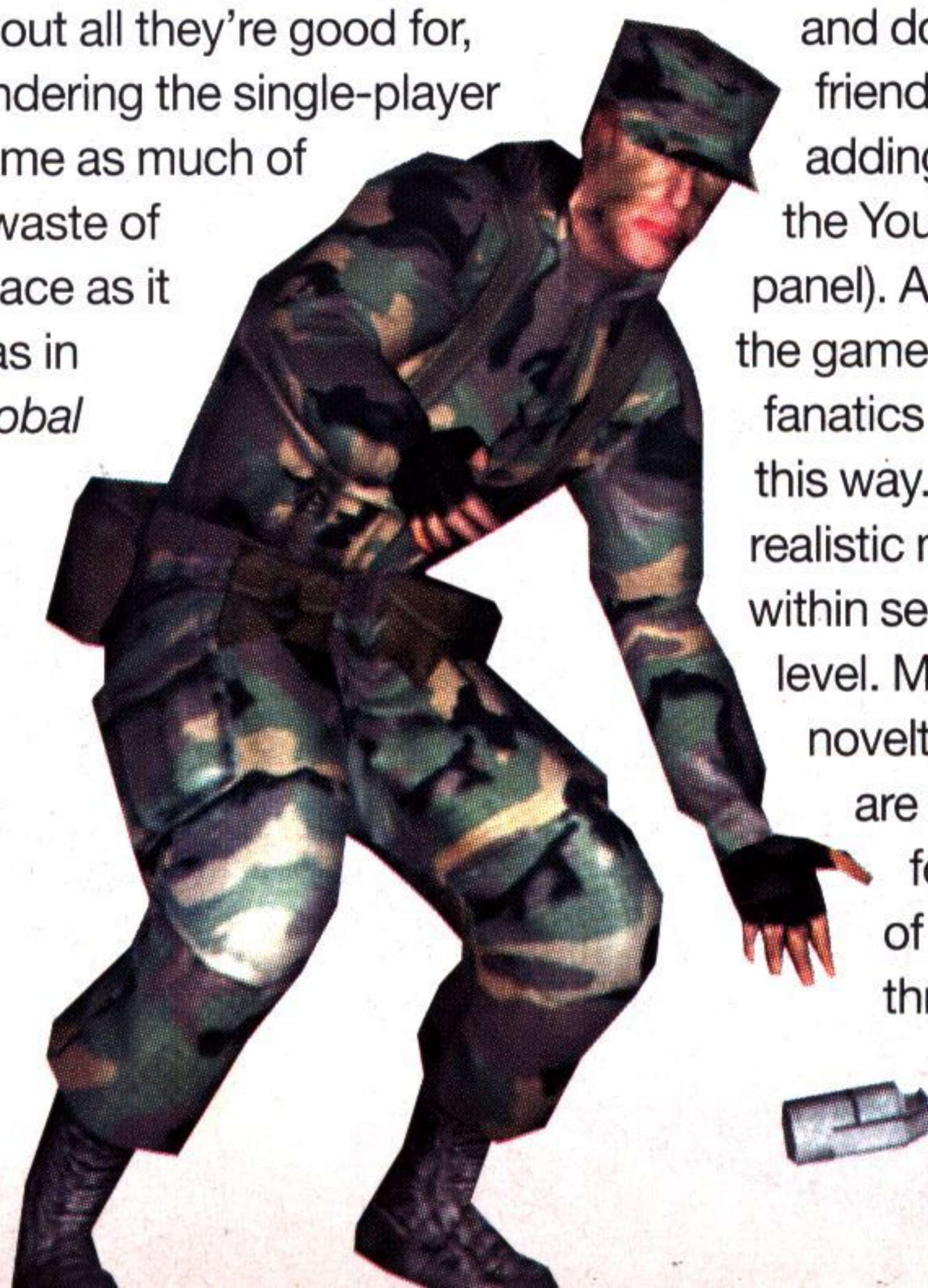
- ✓ Some interesting levels
- ✓ Original RPG touches
- ✗ Sound and graphics are muck
- ✗ Bots are a joke
- ✗ It just feels plain wrong
- ✗ Very high system requirements

# 49

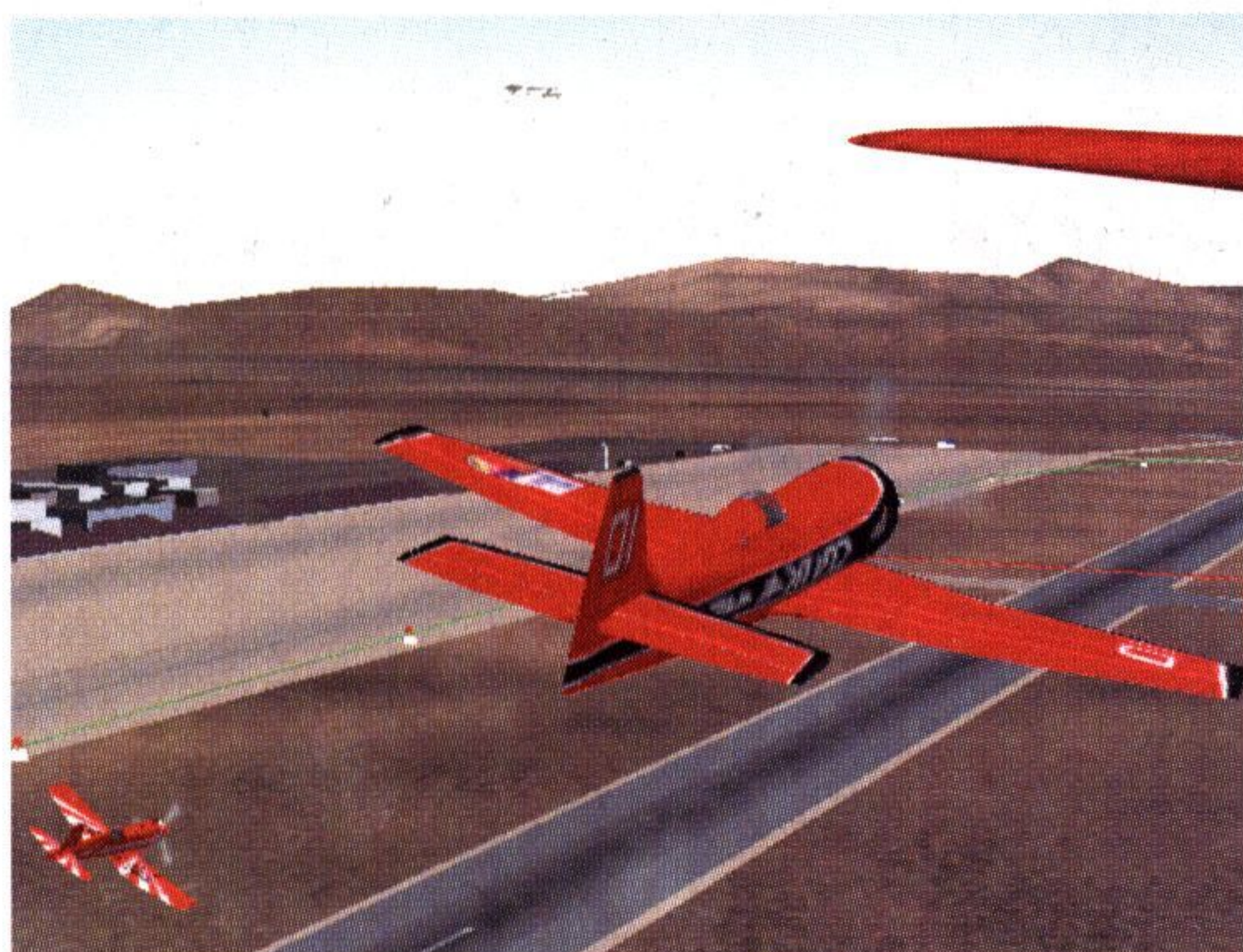
With such tough competition, this is a very average game



The bots are pretty rubbish as well.







"Wave to mummy, go on."



There's plenty of detail in the landscapes, although you only get to see it for a fraction of a second.

# XTREME AIR RACING

■ £24.99 | Pub: Just Flight | Dev: Victory Simulations | ETA: Out Now | [www.xtremeairracing.com](http://www.xtremeairracing.com)

**REQUIRES** PIII 450, 128Mb RAM, and an 8Mb 3D card **DESIRES** PIII 800, 256Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card

**Air Racing? Dave Mathieson goes to xtremes in his big purple Mustang**

**JUDGING** by the popularity of Formula One, there's plenty of interest in watching rich blokes racing round and round in big meaty machines. But the Ferraris and Williams of this world are like lawnmowers compared to the souped-up WW2 planes that are used on the Air Racing circuit. You might not have heard of Air Racing, but it really does exist and *Xtreme Air Racing* (XAR) is a serious attempt to simulate the sport itself.

The game's structure is pretty much the same as any other racing game, except with planes. You can enter a single race, a whole season, play against friends in multiplayer, or you can just practice on any of the courses. XAR features five areas

including Reno (where the real races are held), and over each area you can attempt courses of varying difficulty. Again, like many other racing games, the harder courses only become 'unlocked' as you win races.

## PASS ME THE SPANNER

The planes themselves are a pretty meaty bunch, and tend to be heavily-customised WW2

types like Mustangs and Corsairs. You may have already flown these planes in other sims, but without armour and weapons, and with lots of enhancements and a racy colour scheme, these babies can go. Before you enter a race you get to customise settings like the type of engine, the propeller size and the gearing ratio, and at higher levels these

modifications become essential if you're going to win races.

After taking what seems an age to load, the in-game graphics turn out to be a mixed bag. While the planes look suitably sleek and shiny, and the terrain is well suited to this kind of game, from a distance it all looks pretty average, with big slab-sided mountains and none of the smooth rolling hills found in the likes of *IL-2*. But there's plenty of ground detail that flies past when you're down low, which for the purposes of XAR is where it matters.

## A DAY AT THE RACES

The races themselves are pretty exciting, and zooming around at about 30ft while being buffeted around by the slipstreams of the planes in front is a real struggle. However, it's not as hard as it could be. At lower difficulty levels it's way too easy to win and before long, the races start to get repetitive. Obviously, these arguments also apply to other racing games, but at least with cars you're constantly struggling to keep the thing on the road. XAR lacks this constant interaction with the environment, although some

**"The planes themselves are a pretty meaty bunch"**

of the later courses have obstacles to fly around.

Moaning aside, *Xtreme Air Racing* is still quite a laugh. If you like prop planes but you're tired of combat, you might enjoy playing a flight sim where having your opponents behind you is actually a good thing. **PCZ**



Heavily customised WWII planes are the order of the day.

## INPERSPECTIVE

### IL-2 STURMOVIK

Reviewed Issue 110 Score 90%

The best combat flight sim your money can buy.

### MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR 2002

Reviewed Issue 111 Score 88%

Fly anywhere in the whole world with the latest version of Microsoft's classic sim.

## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Good sense of speed
- ✓ Great planes
- ✓ Original gameplay
- ✗ Limited replayability
- ✗ Not enough scenarios

# 70

**An original but slightly repetitive flight sim**





"You may know me from such sports as Formula One."



Stay in shape and steer clear of the fences. Simple, eh?

# MICHAEL SCHUMACHER RACING WORLD KART 2002

■ £19.99 | Pub: JoWood | Dev: Terratools | ETA: June 28 | [www.ms racingworld.com](http://www.ms racingworld.com)

REQUIRES PIII 450, 64Mb RAM and a16Mb 3D card DESIRES PIII 700, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card

**A Schumacher racing game? Surely a guaranteed winner. Steve Hill waves him through**

**WELCOME** to an early contender for the tenuous licence of the year. Yes, the Teutonic four-time Formula One World Champion used to race karts back in the day, but it's not exactly what he's most renowned for. It's the equivalent of releasing *Tiger Woods Pitch 'n' Putt* or *David Beckham's Back Garden Headers & Volleys*. And besides, few people in this country are likely to be swayed by Schumacher's gob on the box, the square-jawed one generally looked upon with the kind of disdain usually reserved for a freshly laid turd attached to your sneakers.

However, if you're prepared to put reservations aside, there is a solid if unspectacular karting



**A grown man in a child's toy.**

game lurking beneath the spurious German-oriented endorsement. Whereas the sporadic appearance of Schumacher's beaming face does nothing to improve the experience, it can't really be said to detract from it, offering little more than a footnote to the simplistic arcade thrills.

## GHOST IN THE MACHINE

It's not exactly *Mario Kart*, but while there are no banana skins or bunny hops, there is also no tampering with the hydraulics or tweaking the camshaft co-

efficient. What you see is what you get: three classes of kart, 16 apparently authentic tracks, and a variety of playing modes. The driving model is robust enough – if a little rigid – and it really is game development by numbers. Just add lens flare.

Perversely, the one-player modes – including time trials and ghost car – can be more enjoyable than the championship

mode, unencumbered as they are by witless opponents who don't so much cut you up as simply career mindlessly into you, showing barely a flicker of artificial intelligence. On your own, it's a different story. The

**"The driving model is robust enough – if a little rigid"**

key is to avoid getting out of shape and to steer clear of the fences, as one clip can put an end to your prospects thanks to the kart's lack of acceleration.

## THE LAWNMOWER MAN

Initially a pedestrian affair, it's worth persevering with in order to open up the faster classes, which zip along at a fair old lick, despite sounding like ill-tended lawnmowers. Developed by

Germans for Germans, *Schumacher Kart* offers no new ideas whatsoever, but in taking this safety first approach they have created a game with no major flaws. **PCZ**



## INPERSPECTIVE

### SUPER 1 KARTING

Reviewed Issue 90, Score 34%  
A more anal approach, making for considerably less fun.

### F1 2002

Reviewed Issue 117, Score 84%  
Michael Schumacher left karting for Formula One. So should you.

## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Accessible
- ✓ Cheap
- ✗ Weak AI
- ✗ Initially sluggish

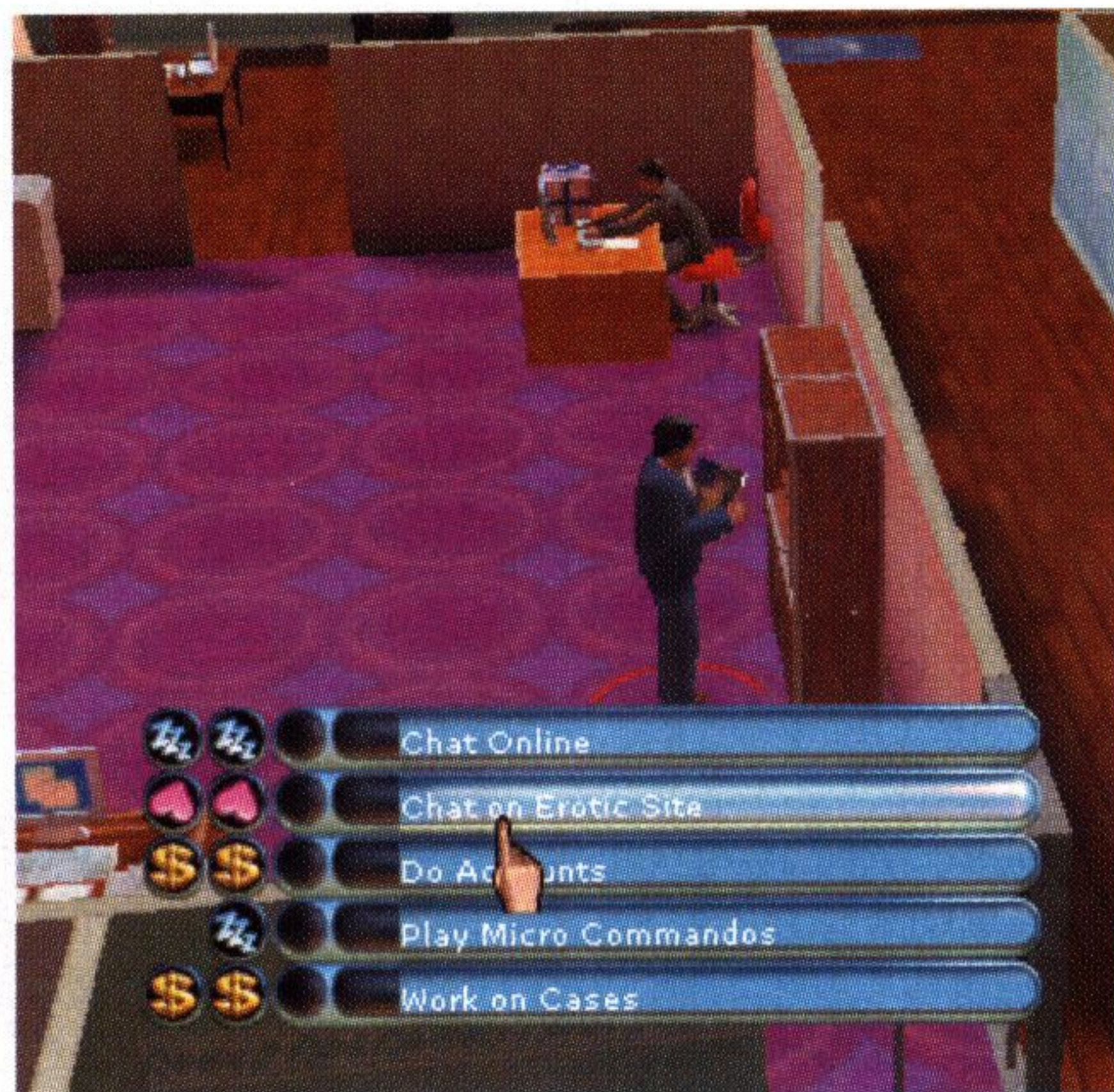
# 55

Quite unremarkable





Firm of lawyers or teenage party? You decide.



So much to do, so little time...

# THE PARTNERS

■ £29.99 | Pub: Monte Cristo | Dev: Monte Cristo | ETA: Out Now

REQUIRES PII 300, 64Mb RAM and a 16Mb video card DESIRES PIII 600, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D graphics card

**Ally McBeal meets The Sims meets Keith Pullin**

**BRAVE IS** the developer that takes on *The Sims*. Braver still is the studio that does it with the satire of *Ally McBeal*.

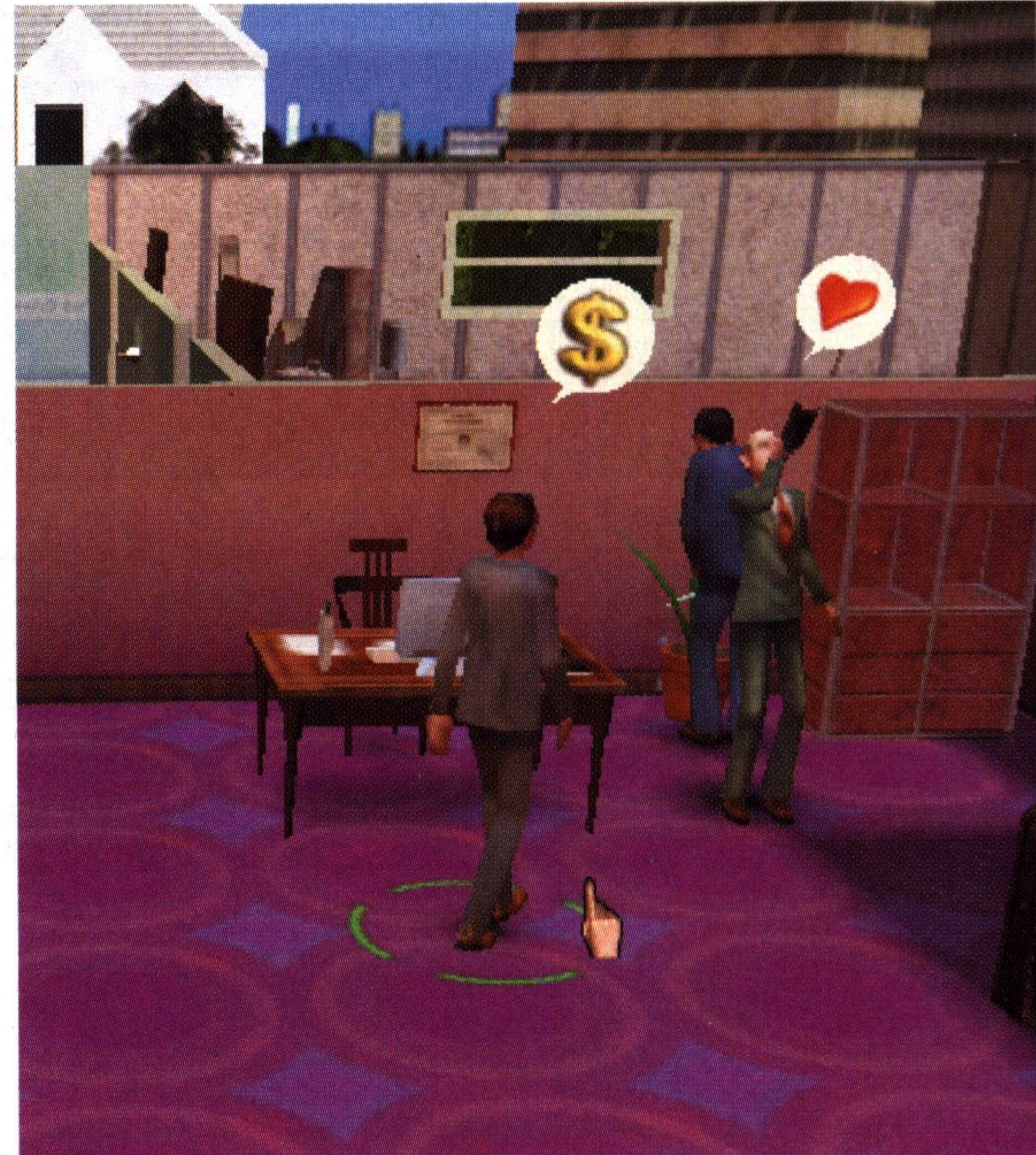
*The Partners* is the first ever game to be based on running a legal company, and initially the novelty is enjoyable. Prospective cases appear as envelopes at the top of the screen, and by clicking the envelopes you decide whether

or not you want to take the case on.

If you accept the case you have to keep your lawyers working on it in order to keep your chances of winning high. If they slack off either by photocopying their buttocks, smooching on the sofa, or by being sidetracked in dozens of other predominately sexually obsessed scenarios, chances

of winning the case are greatly reduced.

Whichever way you look at it, though, *The Partners* is nothing more than an unofficial add-on pack for *The Sims*, albeit with a few frayed edges. The most apparent problems include characters that can only sit down behind their desk from the left as well as characters with incredibly



The boss goes for a quick piss in the bush.

short concentration spans. In the end an infuriating amount of time is spent guiding characters out from other lawyers' underwear or away from erotic chat sites.

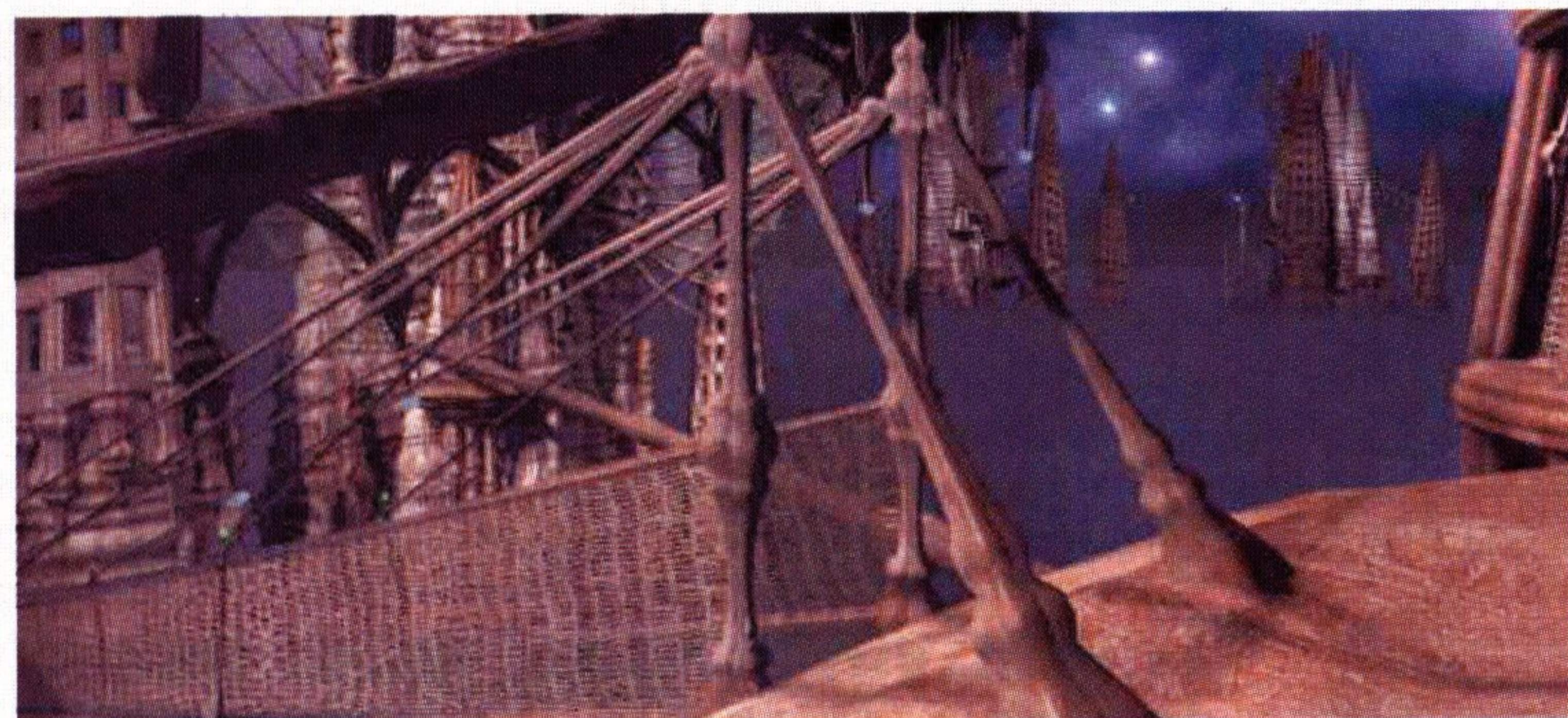
*The Partners* is probably most gamers' idea of hell in a box – *The Sims* and *Ally McBeal* together in one place all at the same time really is enough to drive anyone

insane. Then again, if you happen to adore Electronic Arts' interactive soap opera and the kooky antics of Ms Flockhart you might well be inclined to pass a far more lenient verdict... **PCZ**

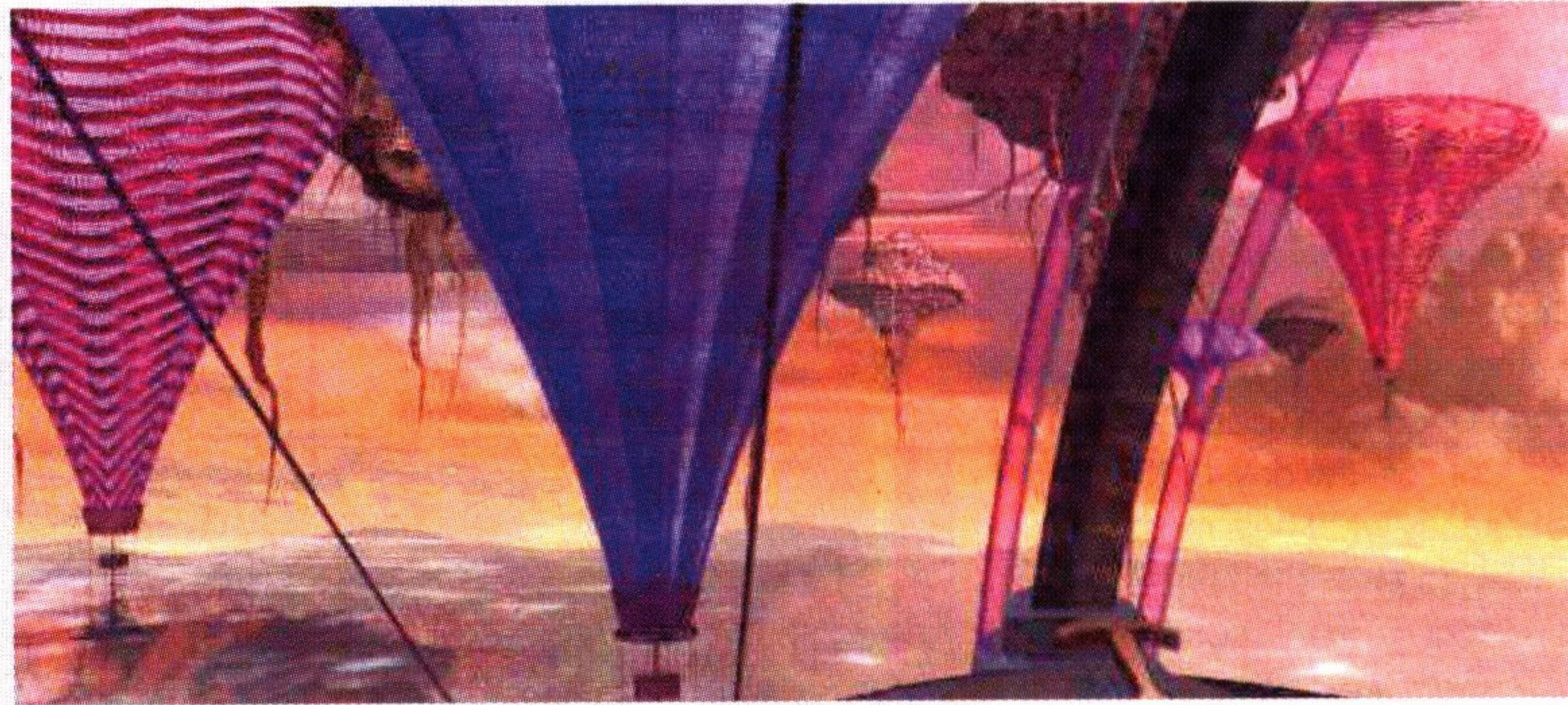
**PCZONE VERDICT**

**50**

Hung jury



This really could be called a bridge too far.



Is that Richard Branson in the distance?

# SCHIZM: MYSTERIOUS JOURNEY

■ £29.99 | Pub: Mindscape | Dev: LK Avalon | ETA: Out Now

REQUIRES PII 333, 32Mb RAM and a Direct X compatible video card DESIRES PIII 900 and a 16Mb 3D card

**Keith Pullin is put off adventure games for life, again**

**ADVENTURE** games 'on rails' they were called, you went where the game wanted you to go, and then you solved puzzles. *Myst* and *Riven* did well out of the concept, but nobody really mourns their passing – apart from a little known developer called LK Avalon it seems.

Appalling FMV acting and extremely dull futuristic plots are all the rage again – apparently. What? You mean you didn't know? You'll be telling us next that you didn't know obscure little lever puzzles were back in fashion. Oh, and then of course there are the blurred graphics... Well, you can see for yourself.

Quite frankly, everything about this game is repugnant. What's even more obscene is that *Schizm* claims to be the "Reinvention of the adventure game" – now that's a joke.

*Schizm* is just another in a long line of sub-standard games from a genre that people lost interest in years ago. And the reason people lost interest was because technology moved

forward and allowed developers to create more believable environments and more interesting games. We can now freely explore and interact with beautiful 3D worlds and genuinely feel part of them. We don't have to rely on a cursor to tell us where we can and can't go. Nowadays if we see a bridge we cross it, if we see an object we pick it up.

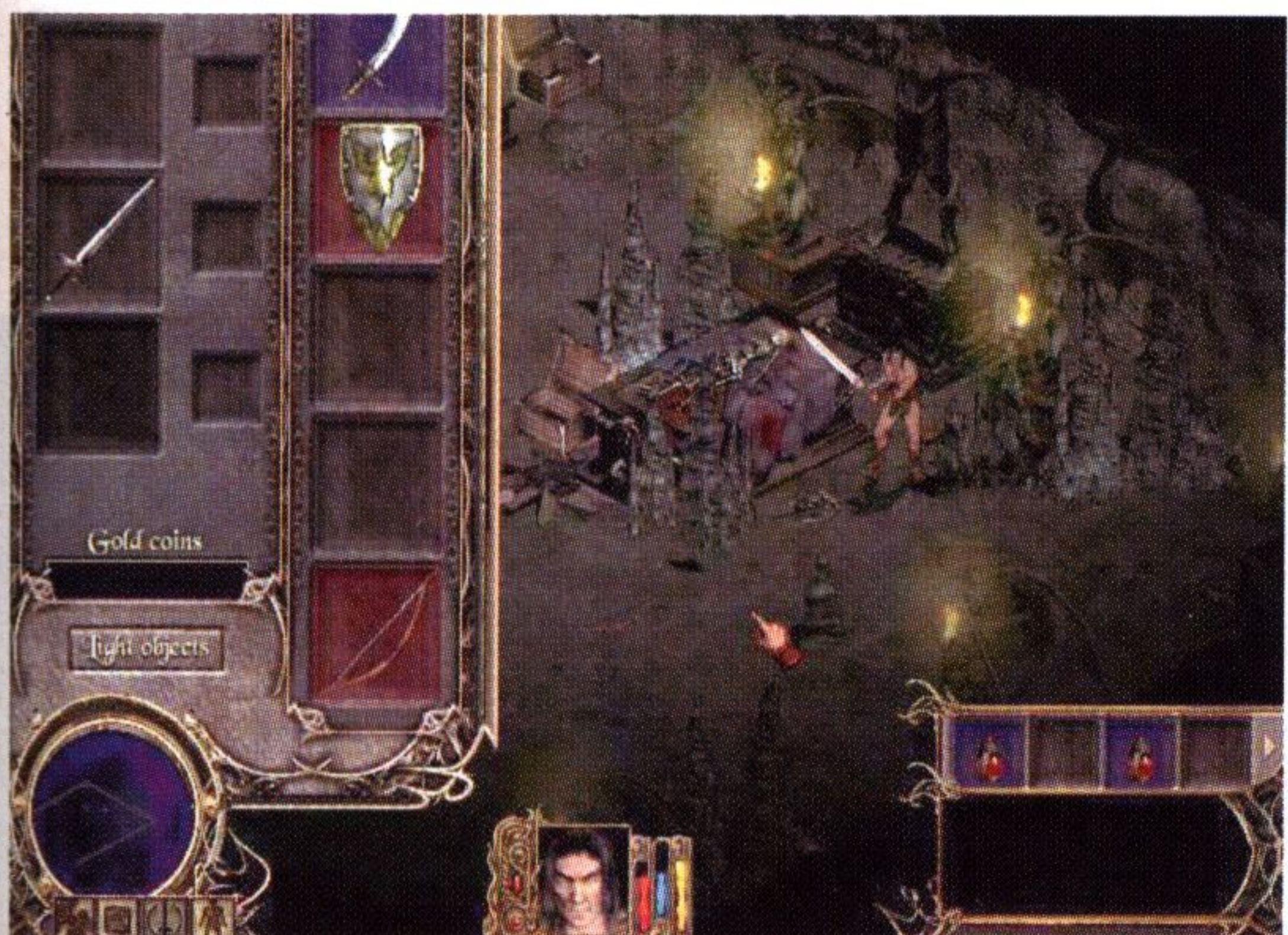
*Schizm* is another world entirely; it's restrictive, lacking in interactivity or atmosphere and simply not up to standard. Basically, it's more regurgitation than reinvention, and should be avoided at all costs. **PCZ**

**PCZONE VERDICT**

**15**

Rotting nostalgia

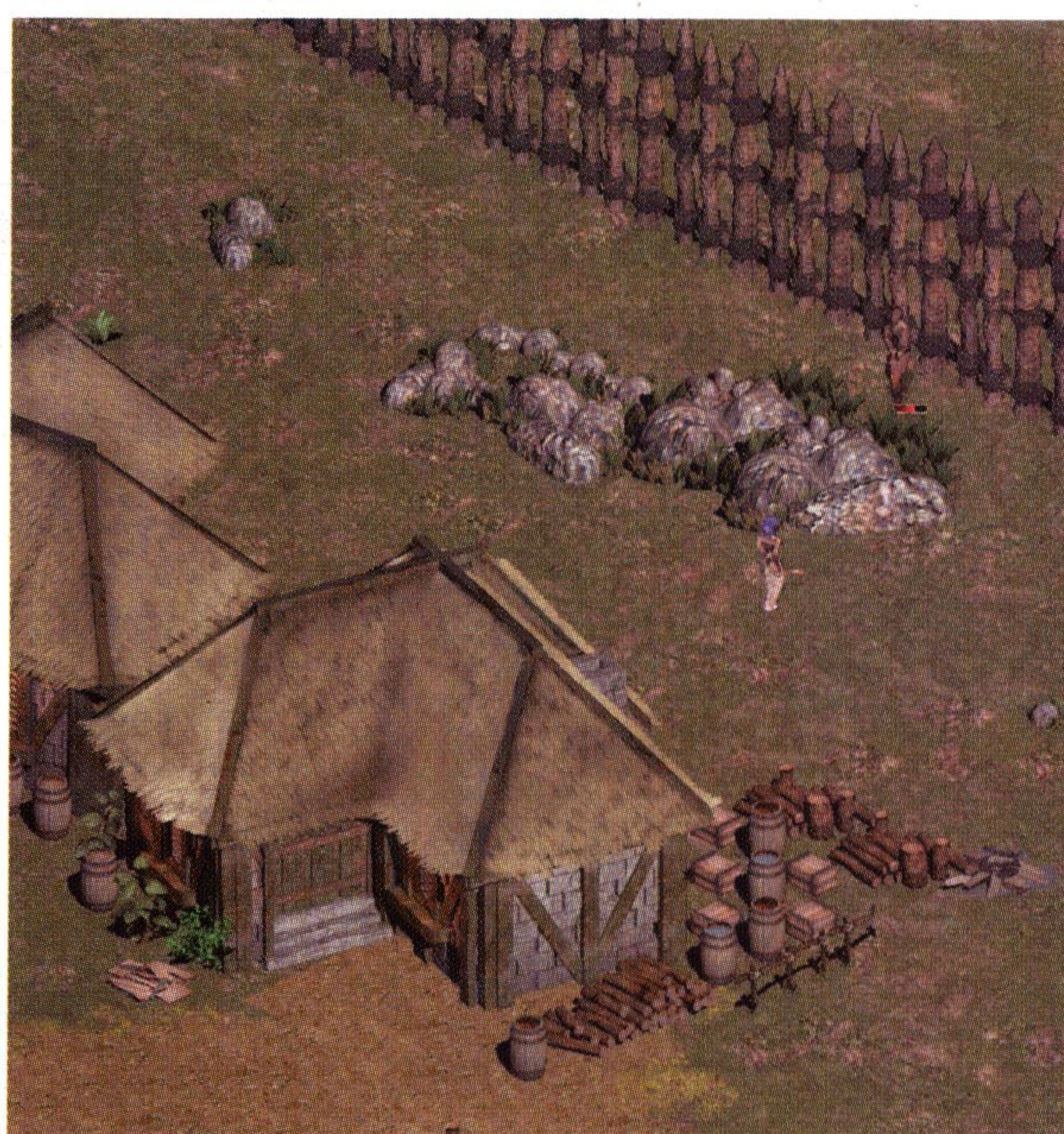




Three classes to choose from, if anyone cares...



A fighter hits something too small to see on the head.



So bored they can't be bothered to fight.

# NIGHTSTONE

■ £19.99 | Pub: Virgin | Dev: New Horizon Studios | ETA: Out Now |

**REQUIRES** PII 233, 64Mb RAM and a 16Mb 3D card **DESIRES** PIII 450 and 128Mb RAM

**Comedy RPG meets Chris Anderson shocker**

**IT HAD TO** happen. After the heady delights of *Morrowind*, the stylish innovations of *Dungeon Siege* and the classic gameplay of *Wizardry 8*, we knew that somewhere out there an RPG accident was waiting to happen. *Nightstone*, for its multiple sins, is the game filling this

questionable position. Imagine the first *Diablo* with lifeless graphics and an even more simplistic magic system and you have *Nightstone* pretty much summed up. A flat, 2D gameworld and dodgy character animations are only the beginning of the problems. The combat is monumentally

mindless and predictable, and while you can choose between a Barbarian, Amazon or Sorceress for your lead character, it hardly matters because they're all as painfully dull as each other. Your objective is to make your way through several quests in an attempt to recover the eponymous Nightstone, which

has been lost for some reason that nobody cares about, and if you make it far enough to find out where it's gone, you'll probably just feel like you've wasted your time.

*Nightstone's* only concession to 'the modern world' is a built-in game editor. So if you're really interested, you can

create your own adventures and send them to your friends to make them hate you. **PC**

**PCZONE  
VERDICT**

**20**

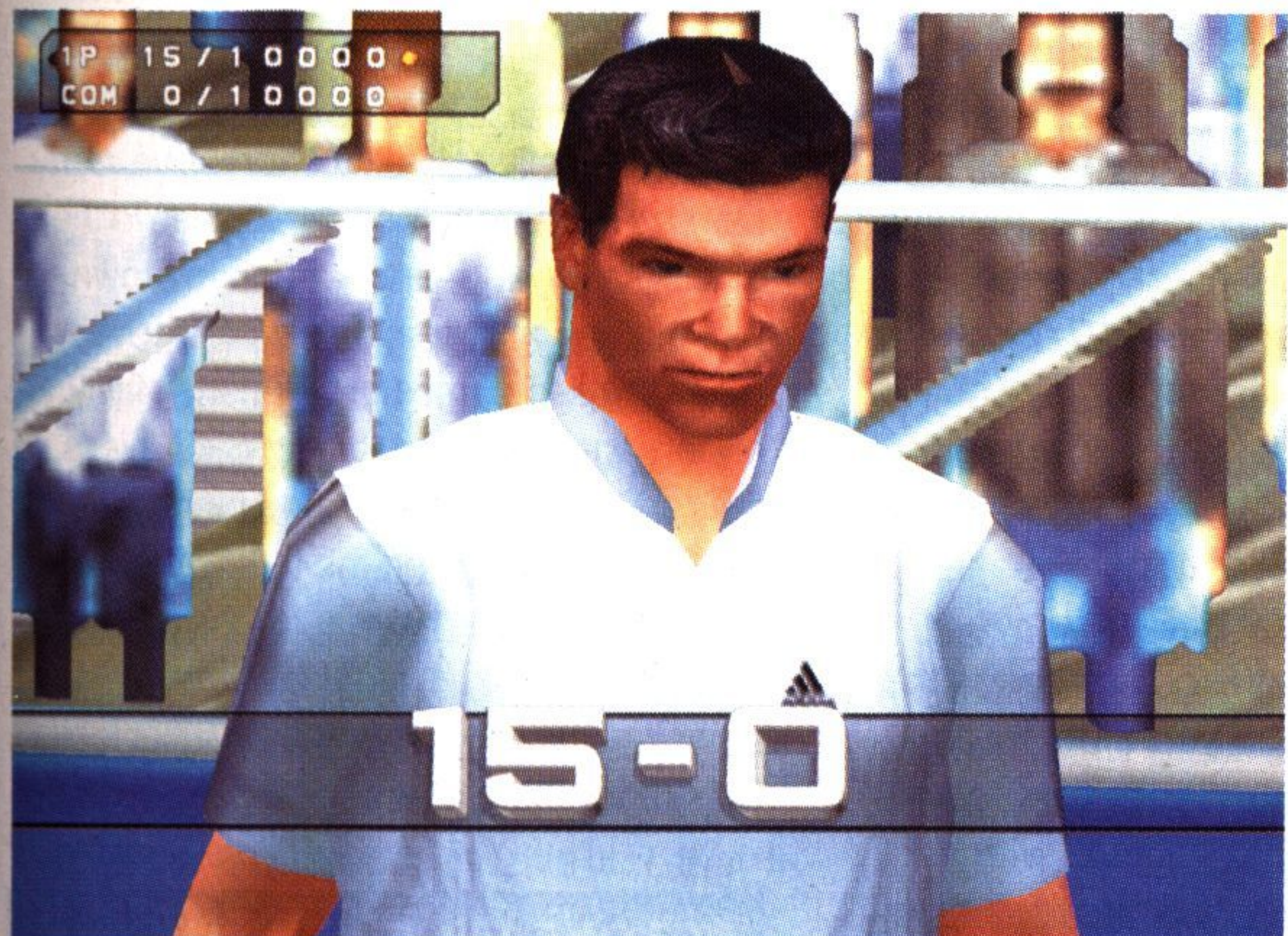
**We didn't like it.  
Can you tell?**

# NEXT GENERATION TENNIS

■ £29.99 | Pub: Wanadoo | Dev: Carapace | ETA: Out Now |

**REQUIRES** PII 400, 64Mb RAM and a 16Mb 3D card **DESIRES** PIII 900, 256Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card

**Anyone for Tennis? Just Steve Hill then**



Believe it or not, that is supposed to be Tim Henman.

**DOES THE PC** really need another tennis game? It's not as if there is a great deal that can be done with the genre, short of giving the players oversized heads or swapping the ball for a hand grenade. For sure, there are various game modes that can be cobbled together in an attempt to keep it interesting, and this game comes with no

less than ten, including four hidden ones. There is also the inclusion of star players, although with the exception of our own limp-wristed failure Tim Henman, we'd struggle to describe them as household names. Throw in the authentic venues and localised umpires, and you've got all the accessories required for the big match atmosphere.



Anyway, tennis is for girls and ponces.

However, this is nothing but superficial dressing if the mechanics of the actual game aren't up to scratch, and it is here that *Next Generation Tennis* lets itself down (as well as having the words Next Generation in the title). Player movement is erratic, as is contact with the ball, which will suddenly launch itself across the net despite the fact that your racket is barely within the environs of it. The controls are also over-complicated, offering four different types of shot, plus the option of left and right spin. And as for your opponent's AI, it does a decent job of replicating blindness, with players often ignoring a ball that is struck directly at them.

In conclusion then, no, the PC doesn't need another tennis game, particularly one as bad as this. **PC**

**PCZONE  
VERDICT**

**30**

**Stick to Virtua Tennis**





# REPLAY

The place to go when you've got no dough

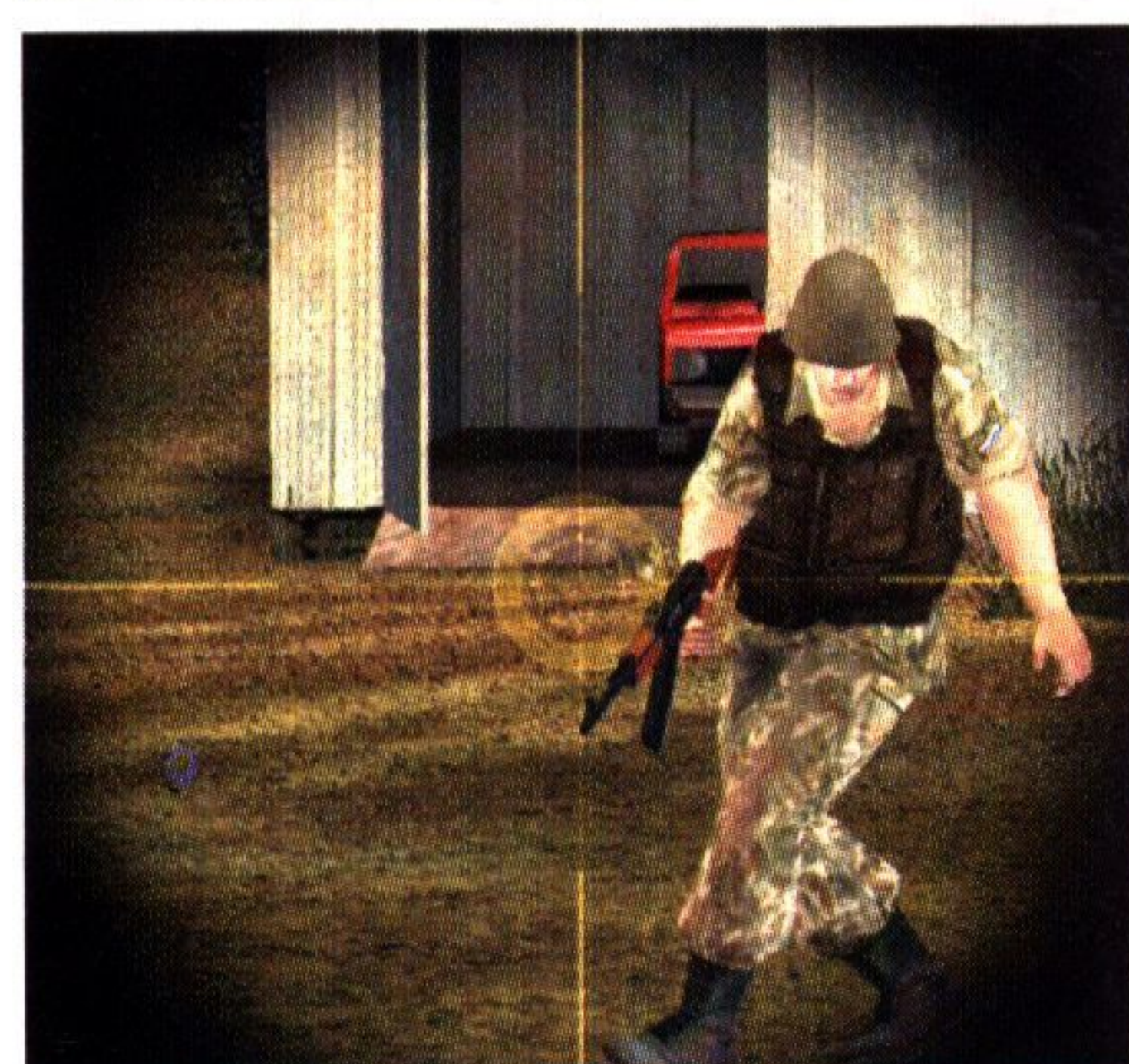


The desert scenarios work perfectly with the engine and gameplay.

## GHOST RECON COLLECTOR'S PACK

■ £34.99 | Pub: Ubi Soft | ETA: Out Now

**USUALLY** these collections are just an easy way to keep a product on the market and try and get people to pay full price for a game that's been out for several months. After all, if you haven't played a game it seems silly to buy an add-on pack



The best alternative to *Operation Flashpoint* in military games.

for it as well when you might stop playing halfway through the original title. But, as far as I'm concerned, the *Desert Siege* expansion is so good it forms an integral part of the *Ghost Recon* experience, and is more than just an add-on.

The best way to describe it is as an outdoors *Rainbow Six*, where you lead a team of soldiers through forests and bombard cities and villages. Stealth and tactics come together brilliantly via *Ghost Recon*'s superb command interface, which brings up a tiny map where you give orders to your team mates. You need to approach each mission intelligently and pay as much attention to your troops' positions as you do to your own trigger-happy fingers. It's all very tense and atmospheric, and a further level of immersion is added through some simple RPG elements, allowing you to build up your favourite soldiers.

While the original title is set in a dark and dreary Russia, *Desert Siege* puts you in the scorching dunes of Africa. But clever level design means you're never bored of the arid environment (it seems to suit the engine better anyway) and the improvement in AI and the lack of fogging make it all the more enjoyable. An essential collection.

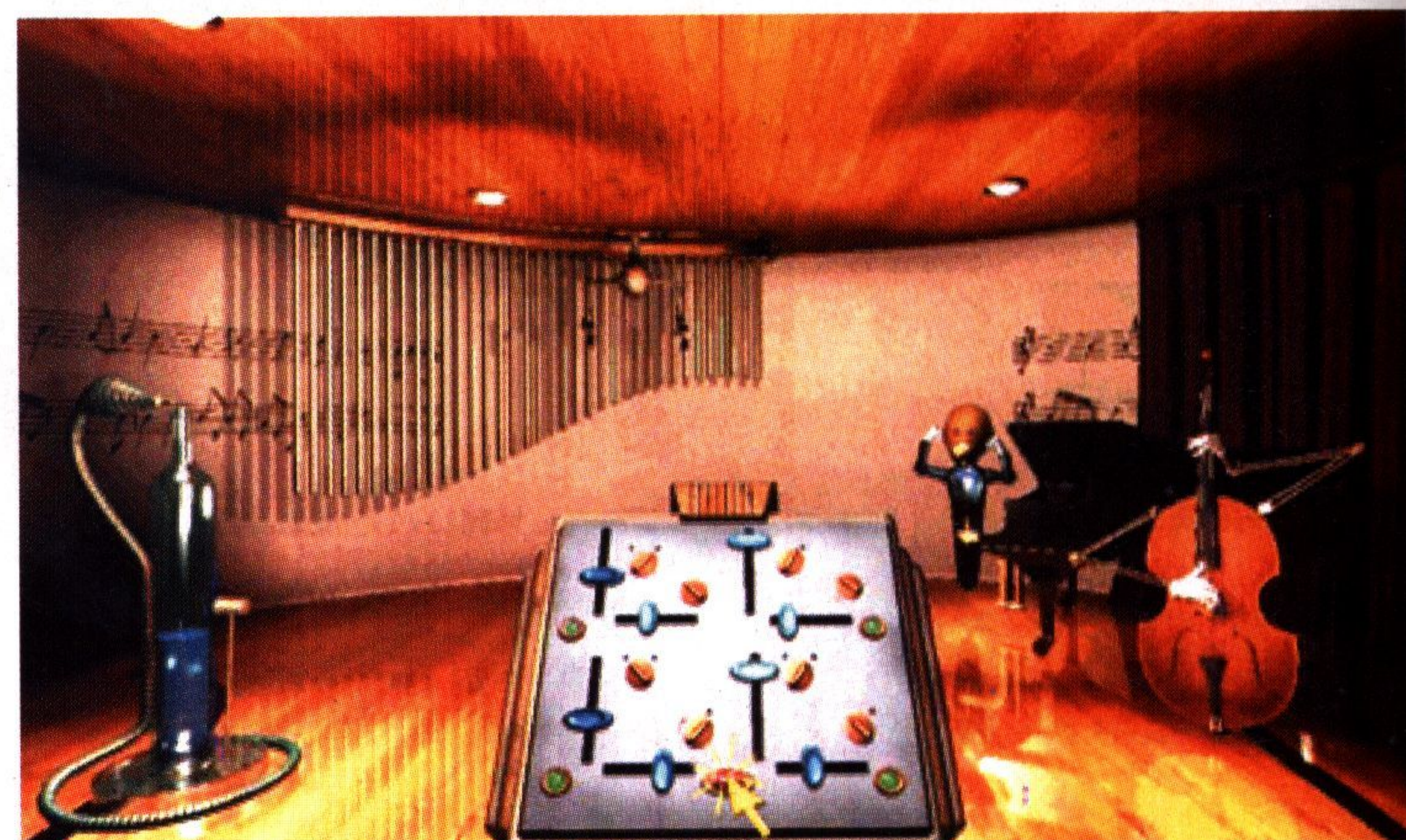
Mark Hill

PCZONE VERDICT

88

## STARSHIP TITANTIC

■ £9.99 | Pub: Simon & Schuster Interactive | ETA: Out Now



Yes, it's a touch on the bizarre side.

**IT WAS** meant to be the start of a new era for adventure games. Instead, *Starship Titanic* failed to make a major retail impact, the follow-up game – *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* – was canned following the unfortunate demise of Douglas Adams, the company was folded, the team made redundant and since then the adventure genre has practically vanished without trace. Funny old business.

Anyway, *Starship Titanic* was one of those 'noble' efforts, a visionary author's idea of a perfect game. Beautifully rendered *Myst*-style graphics tied to a still pretty revolutionary text-input parser that saw you having real-English conversations with the game's characters.

Which, surprisingly, worked well – mostly.

The only fly in the ointment was that it suffered from the same problem that tended to affect most of Adams' work. There were just too many disparate ideas and concepts floating around, looking for a stronger overall narrative to tie them together and retain the player's interest.

That said, it's still worthy of attention for several reasons. It's almost certainly the last time we'll ever see a text-input adventure on commercial release. It's a real treat, and it's funny. In places. A sort of playable *Myst*. Which is all Adams really wanted at the end of the day.

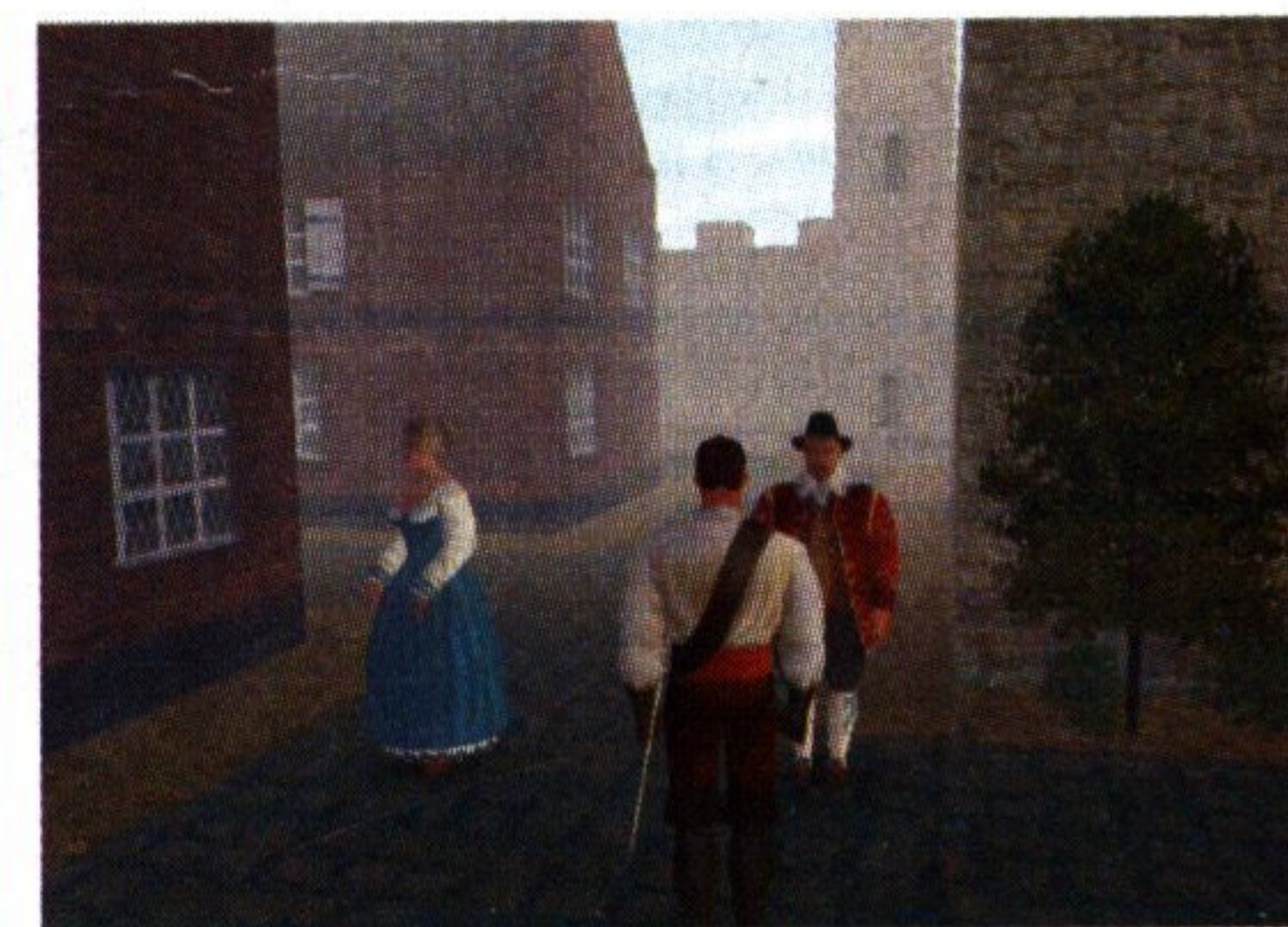
Paul Presley

PCZONE VERDICT

70



There are 20 different ships you can eventually command.



## SEA DOGS

■ £19.99 | Pub: Ubi Soft | ETA: Out Now

**RELEASED** in the US well over a year ago, *Sea Dogs* was reviewed way back in our 100th birthday issue, notching up a respectable 70 per cent. It was, and still is very much, a mish-mash of game-styles, though it leans further towards role-playing than action or adventure. Think of it more like a 17th century version of *Elite*, only with better graphics: You start off with a few gold coins and you must trade your way around the Caribbean, taking on missions, aligning yourself with various factions and building up your ship and crew.

Graphically still fairly impressive, *Sea Dogs* suffers from inconsistencies in the gameplay. Wandering around the town picking up mini-missions is pretty dull, while the sea battles are – ahem – fairly engaging. Of course fans of Sid Meier's golden oldie *Pirates* will find plenty of similarities, but given the fact we've had to wait for more than a year for the game to hit these shores, it might be more prudent to wait a few more months for what looks to be a far more accomplished sequel.

Richie Shoemaker

PCZONE VERDICT

61





One of the most graphically impressive games ever.

## EDGE OF CHAOS: INDEPENDENCE WAR 2

■ £9.99 | Pub: Best Of | ETA: Out Now

**MOST PEOPLE** prefer to run around on foot these days, but there was a time when all gamers wanted to do was fly among the stars blowing up spaceships. Unfortunately, for what is one of the most entertaining and varied genres around, the market for intelligent and action-packed space sims isn't quite what it was. Which is a shame, because *I-War 2* isn't just one of the best, it is also perhaps the most varied.

Certainly one of the better looking games of the last year, *I-War 2* combined a rich, detailed story with a massive gameworld and a freedom to explore that belied the strong narrative. Unlike most

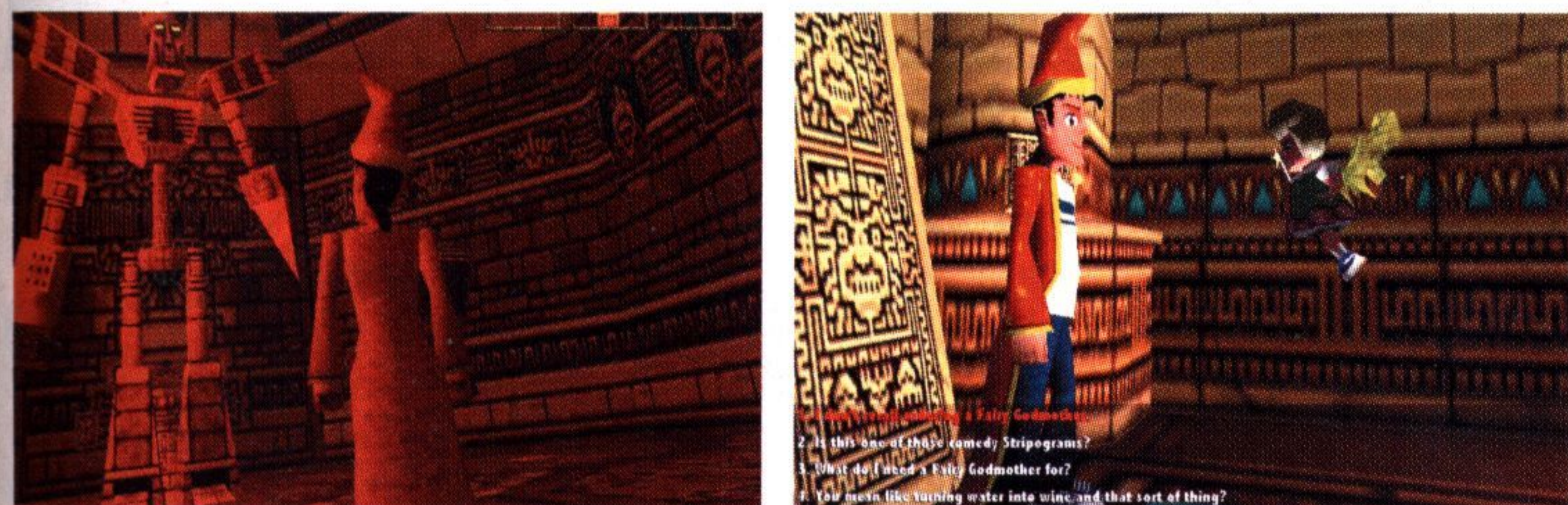
other similar games (*X-Beyond The Frontier*, *Battlecruiser Millennium*), *I-War 2* had a pace to it, intuitive controls and a combat system that actually required some skill. Of course it's a game that also requires a lot of time (and money if you don't have a joystick), which is perhaps why no one bought it first time around. Consider this your final warning – even if you have only a passing interest in space combat, *I-War 2* is an essential purchase, a space-bound epic comparable in many ways to *Morrowind*.

Richie Shoemaker

PCZONE VERDICT **84**

## SIMON THE SORCERER 3D

■ £29.99 | Pub: Vivendi | ETA: Out Now



Bad when we originally reviewed it and just as bad now.

**WELL**, this is an unpleasant surprise. You may remember a scathing review of this game nearly a year and a half ago, when it was due to be published by Hasbro. It never actually came out – supposedly because of the problems facing the publishers at the time, though its monstrous lack of quality must have had something to do with it – but it has now been unwisely resurrected by Vivendi.

I say unwisely, but it's no coincidence that it has hit the shops more or less at the same time as the *Harry Potter* DVD, and with box artwork exploiting this fact, they'll probably shift a few copies to uninformed parents and children. They haven't even

had the decency to release it at a reduced price (although if you hunt around you should be able to pick it up for £20).

And it's still one of the worst adventure games ever made. The graphics were abysmal a year and a half ago, and they haven't exactly improved with age. But it's the combination of garish jokes and leaden gameplay that really drags it down.

Headfirst has moved on from this pile of dung and is working on the impressive looking *Call Of Cthulhu*. So let's try and pretend this never happened. Again.

Mark Hill

PCZONE VERDICT **25**

## ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

■ £9.99 | Pub: Best Of | ETA: Out Now

**SOMETIMES** it takes just three months for a game to be reduced in price. Sometimes it takes three years. This, the king of 'Tycoon' games, has sold so many copies it is no wonder the publishers have been squeezing every last cent out of it, because until *The Sims* came along, *RollerCoaster Tycoon* was the biggest PC game around for a long, long time.

And it deserved to be. Addictive, intricate and utterly disarming, *RollerCoaster Tycoon* allowed you to build your own fun park, staff it and hopefully make punters happy. Designing your own rollercoasters was the fun part, but there was so much depth to the game that it was one you could lose yourself in for weeks. *Theme Park* may have been the original, *Theme Park World* may have been in 3D, but *RollerCoaster Tycoon* remains the best. Until the sequel...

Richie Shoemaker

PCZONE VERDICT

**82**



Even better than the real thing. Almost.



The options are endless.

## LEFTOVERS

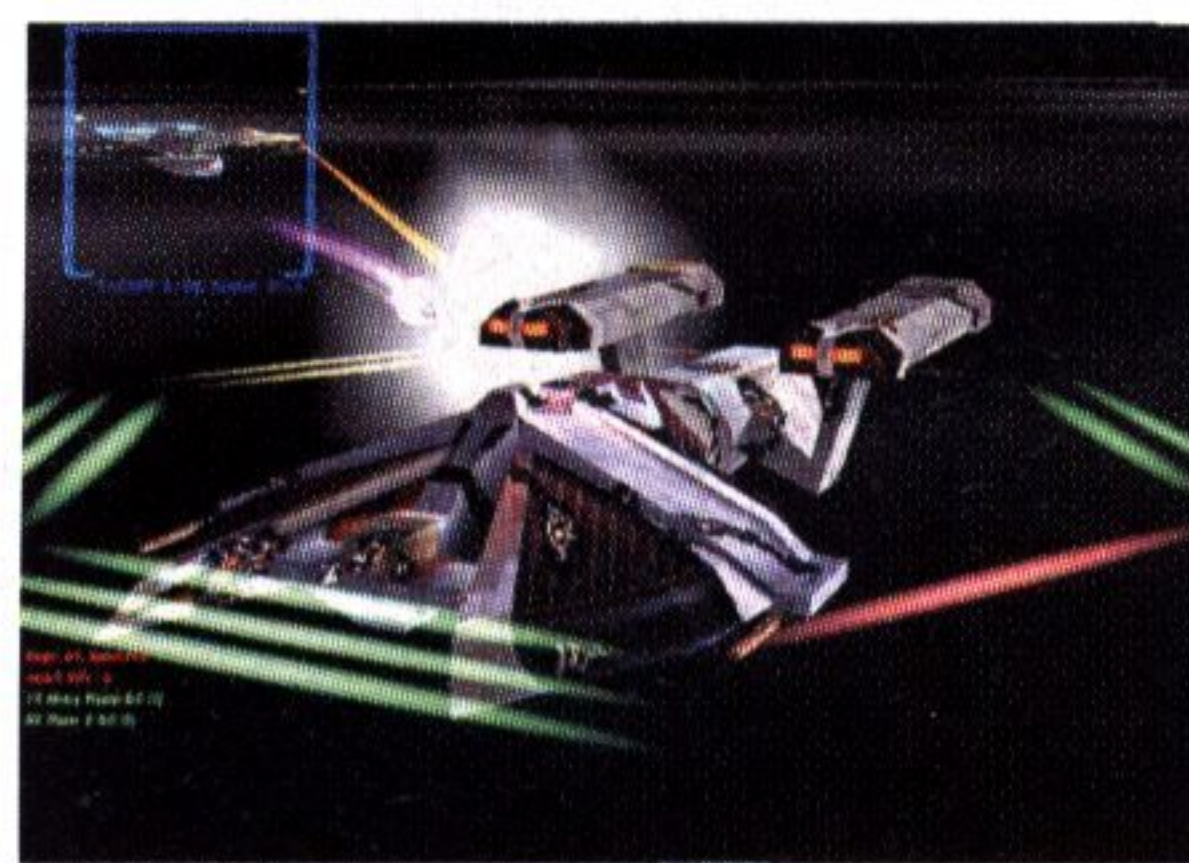
### PLEASE SIR CAN I HAVE SOME MORE SIR?

A feast of re-issues and budget games for you this month, not all of which are quite so bad. *Half-Life* – which is quite a good game by all accounts – has recently been re-released again under the subtitle *Generations* (VU Games, £19.99) and includes the enjoyable micro-expansion pack *Blue Shift* as well as the usual *Team Fortress Classic*, *Opposing Force* and *Counter-Strike*, making it an essential purchase for the five of you without a copy of the game – 94 per cent. The same can't be said for *Squad Leader* (Best Of, £9.99), which was slated on its first release and will be again. Supposedly based on the classic tabletop wargame, it could best be described as a WWII homage to *X-Com*. Unfortunately *X-Com* did *X-Com* better, and despite being sci-fi, was more adept at WWII as well. Leave this rotten corpse in the trenches – 10 per cent.

On The White Label this month (all £9.99) are a few fairly recent releases. Best looking is *Sacrifice*, Shiny's frantic spellfest RTS, which still looks incredible and is well worth ten pounds – 78 per cent. Less impressive is the misleadingly titled *Original War*, in which animation and simplistic battles dragged down the decent story and rich building features – 65 per cent. Next up are two budget *Star Trek* strategy efforts, *Starfleet Command II* (70 per cent) and *Orion Pirates* (73 per cent) – the latter a standalone add-on to the former. As far as space-based strategy games go, both are inferior to *Homeworld*, but certainly as far as *Star Trek* games go they're damn good, especially if you were ever a fan of the '70s boardgame on which they're based.

Finally we see *The Mech Collection* (Microsoft, £29.99), which includes *MechWarrior 4*, the *Black Knight* expansion and *MechComm 2*. All good and at a reasonable price. But here in the UK we seem to be mechophobic, so unfortunately even with a score of 85 per cent no one's going to buy it.

Richie Shoemaker



Orion Pirates



Sacrifice



Squad Leader



# UPDATES

A place for single-player redemption and multiplayer action

## MULTIPLE CHANCES

What's all this about then?

Some PC games are exceptionally flaky on release, with bugs and omissions that are subsequently fixed over time with patches. When this happens we'll take another look and see if the score is worth upping. By the same token, massively multiplayer games are ever-evolving and because of this we'll be revisiting major releases to see what's changed over time.

This is also the place where we take a proper look at the multiplayer side of games. As we regularly review games before they go on sale, often there are no public servers up and running, so instead of telling you how we think the game is going to play we'll wait and do a proper multiplayer review here, outlining how many servers are up and how the game plays online.

# GLOBAL OPERATIONS

■ £29.99 | Pub: EA | Dev: Barking Dog | ETA: Out Now | [www.globalopsgame.com](http://www.globalopsgame.com) | Players 2-26

REQUIRES PIII 500, 128Mb RAM and a 3D card DESIRES 32Mb 3D card an ADSL connection

MULTIPLAYER

The single-player was a joke, now *Mark Hill* plays it online with real people

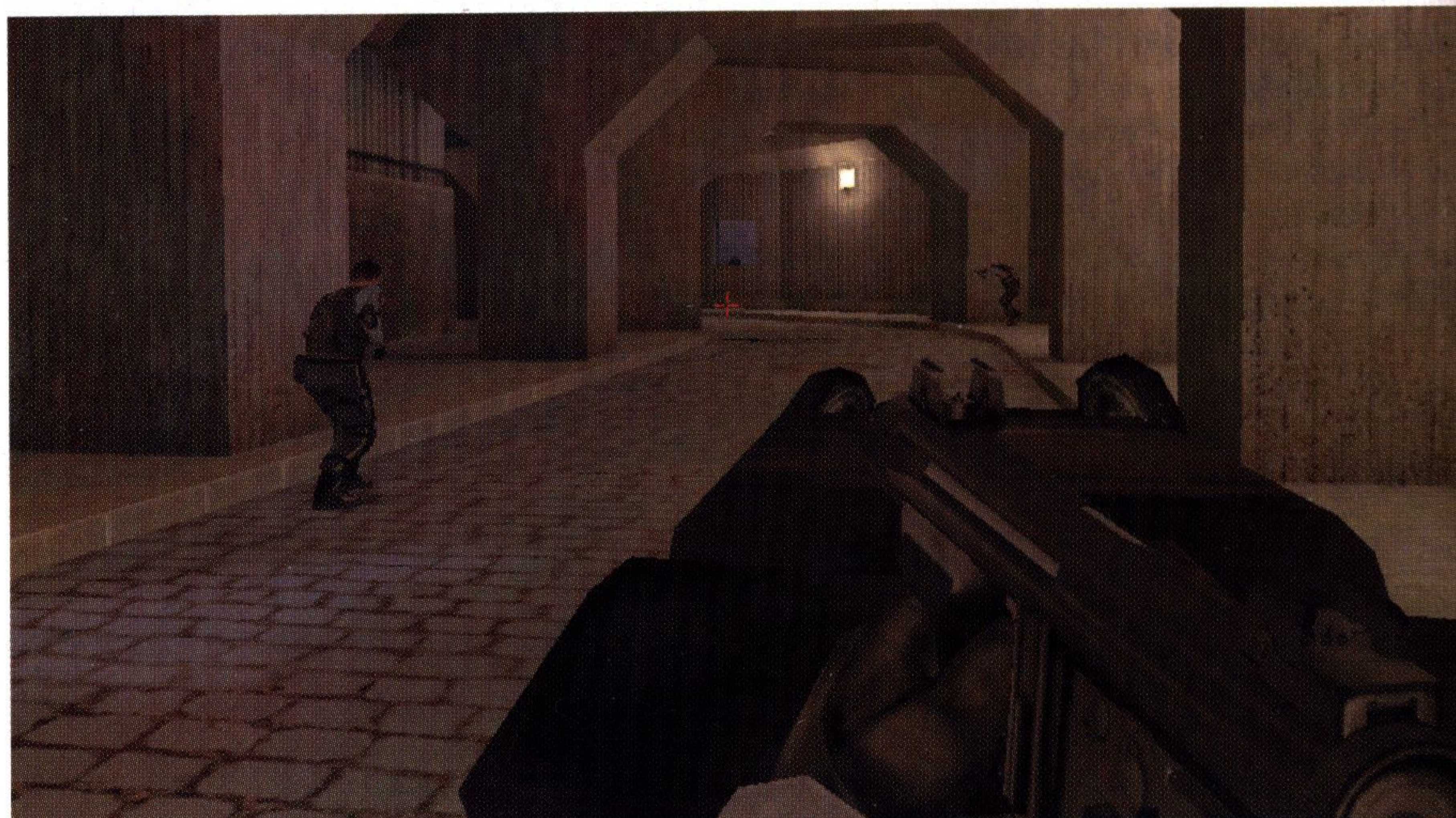
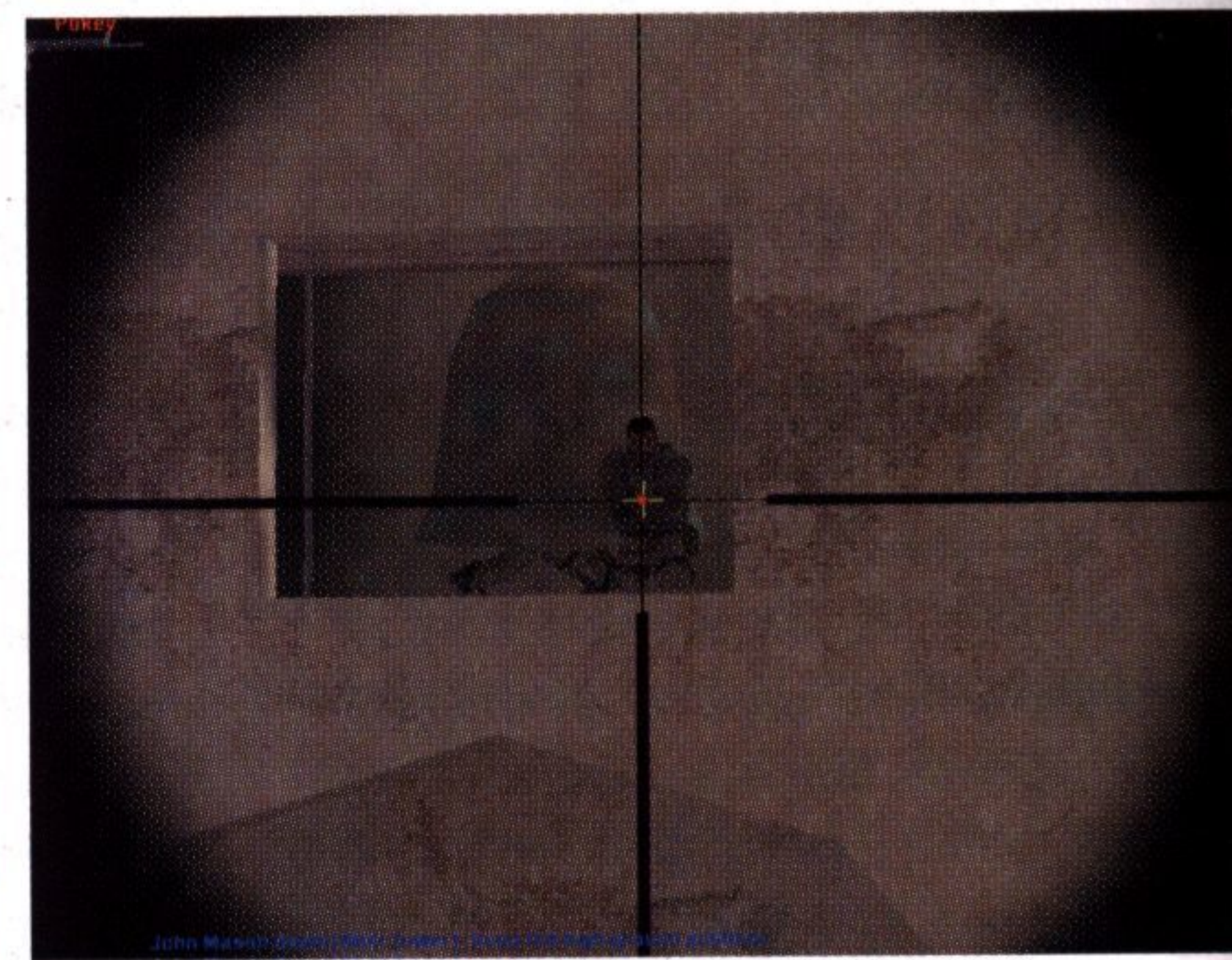
WITH SO many free mods offering multiplayer team-based action, a retail game has to offer something pretty special to survive. I already said in my original review that it wasn't a good single-player campaign that was going to make *Global Ops* stand out. Brainless bots and a bad structure saw to that. But what about online?

Well, you won't have any problems finding a server to play on. Not because there are loads of them but because the dozen or so that do have people playing usually have spaces free. But, despite the replacement of real people for bots, *Global Ops* is far from perfect, and subsequently ends up being much the same as the single-player game.

## GO GO GO

My main criticism of the bots (apart from their stupidity) was they just charged forward with no regard for stealth or tactics. It seems they were quite realistic. Whether it's because of the nature of the gameplay or because no one is taking it seriously, online matches are a fast free-for-all. This is partly the game's fault. If you go sneaking around CS-style it doesn't feel right. Plus you just get trampled by rushing enemies because the sound isn't quite as integral to your awareness.

But GO is supposed to be all about teamplay, so it's a shame



It's not a game of skill and tactics like *Counter-Strike* is.

that all the matches I took part in were pretty much team-free. Apart from the odd medic giving me health now and then, there was no attempt to work a strategy or have a balanced set of specialists. And, unlike CS, there was little communication

between the players. You die, you respawn after a while, then run back into the fray. That's it.

## TEAMLESS

Still, the use of tear gas and thermal vision does make it a bit different, even if the extensive backgrounds to each mission make no difference to the actual shooting. It doesn't matter why you're fighting or which faction you're supposed to be, it's still just one team against another. Or rather it's every man for himself, as most players go out for maximum kills. Considering it's an objective-driven game, most people don't give a damn about the objectives. If you want to play properly join a clan.

Another problem is the lag. Version 2.0 solves some bugs but on the whole remains laggy.

Considering the simplicity of the graphics and animations, there's really no excuse for that.

And as for Barking Dog's big claims about the impossibility of cheating, it's still too early to say if it works. But hackers are hardly going to bother with a game only a handful of people play. With few servers and often brainless teammates, GO falls well short in the team-based online shooter stakes, and because of this deserves an even lower score than its single-player mode. **[F]**



There are only three or four really good maps. The rest are cack.



The only difference between bots and real people is that these ones know where they're going.



## PCZONE VERDICT

FULL REVIEW (ISSUE 116)	78
MULTIPLAYER SCORE	68
Not nearly as good as a lot of free mods	



# LASER SQUAD NEMESIS V1.08

ON THE  
CD  
DVD

■ US\$15 per six-month subscription | Pub: Codo Games | Dev: Codo Games | ETA: Out Now |  
www.lasersquadnemesis.com | Players: 2

PATCHED

REQUIRES: PII 233, 64Mb RAM and Internet access DESIRES: A 16Mb 3D card, an ADSL connection and a credit card

## ONLINE ONLY

From rough gem to shining star, **Richie Shoemaker** charts the progress of the best game you've never heard of



## THE SIMPLEST

ideas are often the best, and they don't come much simpler than *Laser Squad*. Two sides square off: eliminate one, and the winner claims the spoils – valuable league points in a persistent championship.

Much has changed since the original game hit the ageing Spectrum at the end of the '80s – as it has since *Nemesis*, the multiplayer update, hit the PC earlier this year. We still await the introduction of *LSN*'s third playable race, but to make up for it, *LSN*'s original paltry two maps now number over 30 (most of



There are over 30 maps now, which means games are much more varied.



Multi-level maps are next on the wish list.

them third-party) and from just 50 or so beta testers, the *LSN* Premiership numbers nearly a thousand regulars.

In the couple of months since release the game has altered quite dramatically. The units have been given a proper paint job, the interface has been modernised, and to ease people into the turn-based online action, there is now a single-player tutorial. As well as the new HQ

game mode (destroy the enemy HQ unit), players can determine the time limit between turns – which acts like the clock in Chess – meaning those facing defeat will automatically concede if they ignore their inbox.

Basically a very good game has been steadily getting better. At US\$15 for a six-month subscription, it represents excellent value for money, and you can even get your money

back if you're not happy after 30 days. If after that time you're still unhappy, then you must be a very sad individual anyway.

## PCZONE VERDICT

ORIGINAL SCORE	73
PATCHED SCORE	80
It'll be a classic by Christmas	

# DARK AGE OF CAMELOT V1.50

■ £6 per month | Pub: Wanadoo | Dev: Mythic | ETA: Out Now |  
www.darkageofcamelot.com | Players: Unlimited

REQUIRES: PIII 450, 128Mb RAM, 16Mb 3D card and a 56K modem DESIRES: P4 1GHz, 256Mb RAM, 32Mb 3D card and an ADSL connection

PATCHED

## ONLINE ONLY

It was the most eagerly awaited MMORPG of last year. But has it stayed fresh? **Daniel Emery** dons leather chaps and finds out



Dark Age Of Camelot isn't as good as it originally promised to be.

**WHEN** *Dark Age Of Camelot* launched, it attracted thousands of bored and disenfranchised gamers. Numbers in *EverQuest* and other online games dropped while people flocked to this new 'swords and spells' game set in a medieval environment. So six months (and many updates) on, is the magic of *DAoC* still there? The short answer is yes and no. But mainly no.

The trouble with *DAoC* is that it gets old really fast. While the developers have gone to serious lengths to make the quests worthwhile, they have still neglected the fundamental

gameplay side – that of slaying monsters and gaining experience. While *EverQuest* boasts many different locations to do battle in, *DAoC* has far fewer, so after a couple of months, you find yourself with déjà vu. And that's when the battles stop being fun.

On the flipside, *DAoC* still excels in the player-versus-player aspect (or Realm versus Realm as it's called) which somewhat makes up for its other shortcomings, but this doesn't manage to save it. In May, a huge update addressed many of the problems with Realm versus

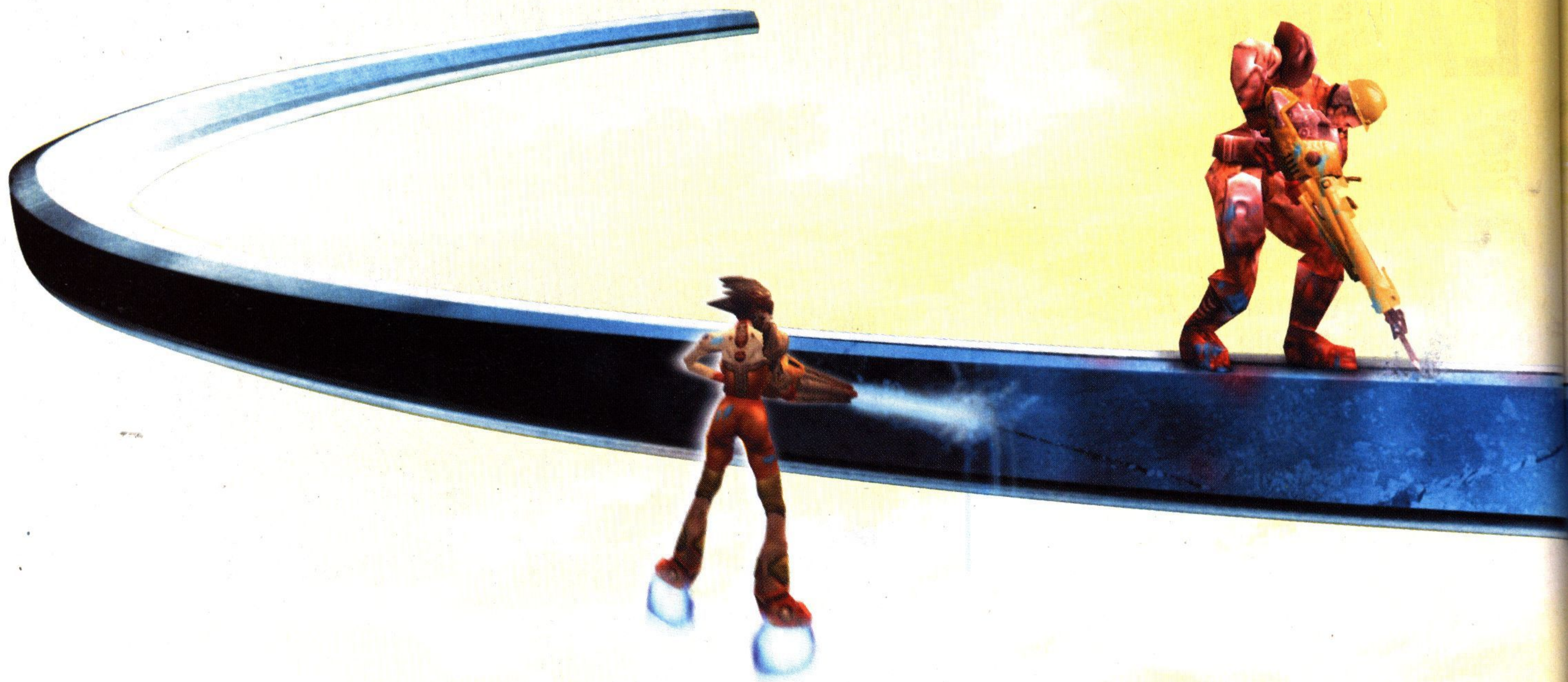
Realm, which did improve the game. But there are still real issues with the Scout class (bowmen). Basically, a good one can pick the left gonad off a wasp at 300 feet, so even with your best armour and sword, you'll find your warrior becoming fodder in seconds.

If you've still got an account then give it a go. If not, best wait for a few more patches.

## PCZONE VERDICT

ORIGINAL SCORE (ISSUE 112)	87
PATCHED SCORE	68
Needs to try harder	





# QUAKE III ARENA MODS SUPERTEST

## THE CONTENDERS

### ROCKET ARENA

[www.planetquake.com/servers/arena](http://www.planetquake.com/servers/arena)



### PAINKEEP

[www.planetquake.com/teamevolve](http://www.planetquake.com/teamevolve)



### JAILBREAK: POW

[www.planetquake.com/bkp](http://www.planetquake.com/bkp)



### PROBALL

[www.planetquake.com/proball](http://www.planetquake.com/proball)



### ALLIANCE

[www.planetquake.com/alliance](http://www.planetquake.com/alliance)



## THE JURY

### MARTIN KORDA 'NAMELESS ONE'



### DAVE WOODS 'KID UNKNOWN'



### MARK HILL 'LEATHERFACE'



### ANTHONY HOLDEN 'SHOKUPAN'



ON THE DVD It's not all *Counter-Strike* at *ZONE* towers. Mark Hill orchestrates a debate on the best and most accessible mods for the mighty *Quake III*

**THERE ARE SO MANY** *Quake III* mods out there that we've decided to keep it simple and discuss only those you can jump straight into without having to learn a whole new complicated set of game-rules. These mods are fast, loud and, above all, loads of fun. Not only that, they're free too. That doesn't mean we're going to pull any punches, but it does mean every one is an admirable piece of altruistic programming. Bring it on.

**Anthony:** Apart from *Counter-Strike*, *Quake* mods are the best.

**Dave:** And the most popular, although *Unreal Tournament* has got some really popular ones too.

**Mark:** I'd say *Half-Life* is still the number one game for modding. CS is the main one of course, but you have *Day Of Defeat* and stuff like that, too. The thing with *Quake* mods is that it's often the same game with a few changes, while *Half-Life* mods change the whole thing.

**Dave:** *Quake* suits fast deathmatch best, but not the slower team-based games.

**Mark:** Which is why *Urban Terror* and *Quake Fortress* aren't in here. I don't think they work. Even when proper developers use the engine for slower gameplay it doesn't feel right.

**Martin:** It worked for *Medal Of Honor*.

**Dave:** But they changed the engine a lot. *Quake* mods are where it all started though, right back to the first one.

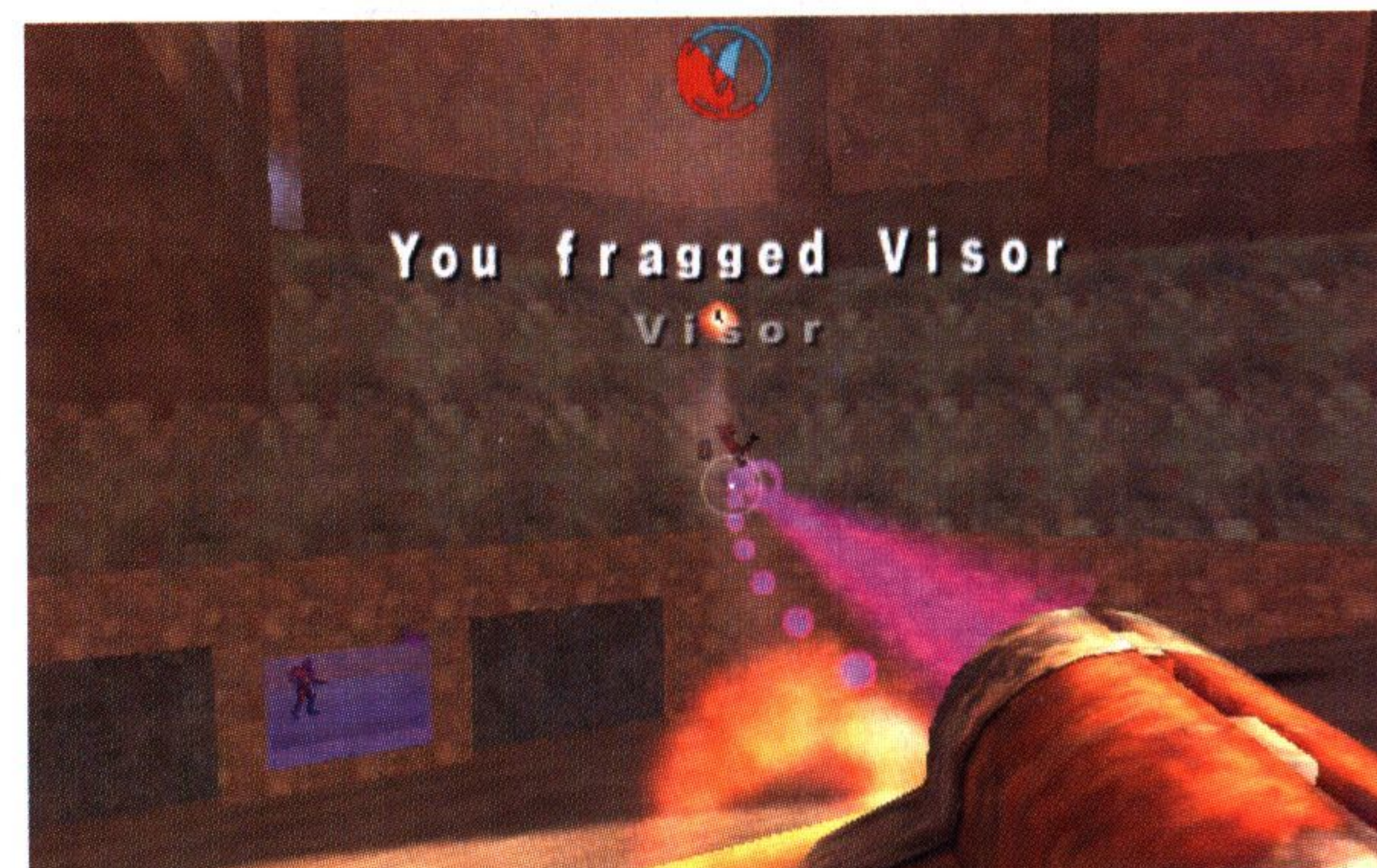
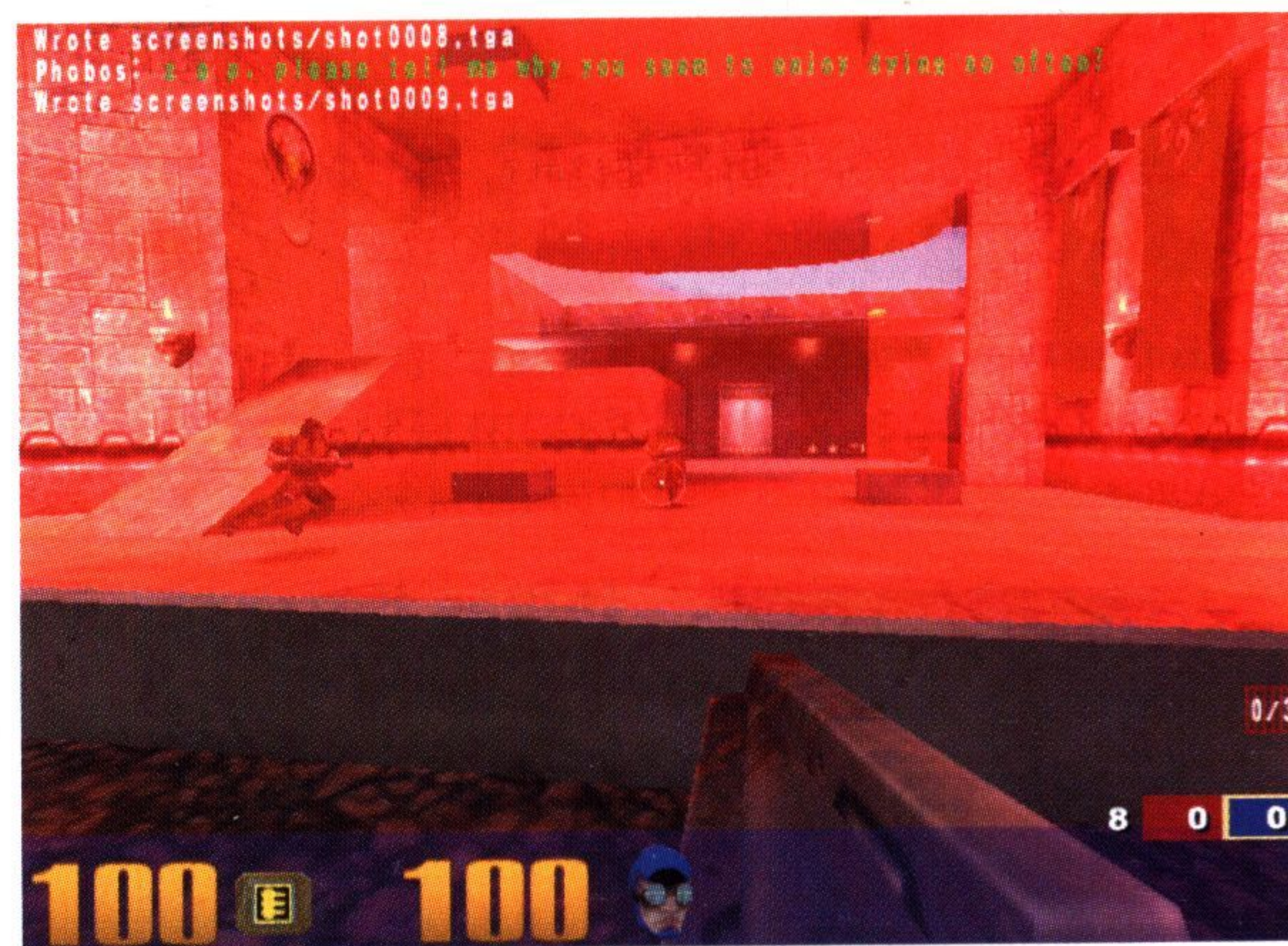
**Anthony:** The whole community has grown with each *Quake* release. A lot of *Half-Life* modding grew out of that community.

### JAILBREAK: POW

**Dave:** I love it. They've taken the Capture The Flag concept and changed it slightly, almost like Last Man Standing but you can escape or get let out of jail. It only works when the maps are good.

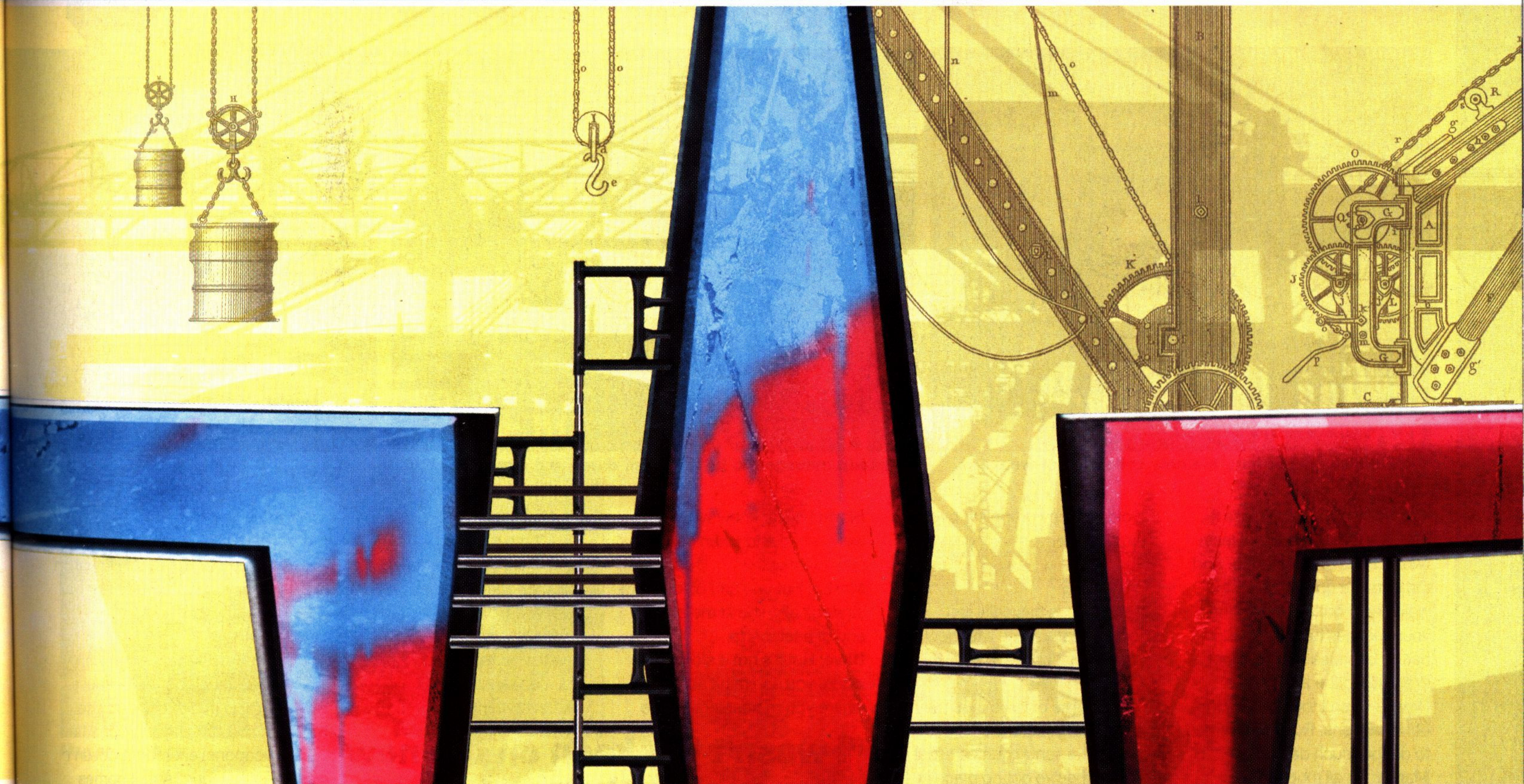
**Mark:** And the original maps are very good.

**Dave:** Yeah, the extra ones we've downloaded are just



Some people are just pure jailbait.





awful though. The official maps are great when you get three or four on each side.

**Mark:** I think two or three of the official maps are incredible, some of the best *Quake* maps full stop. This is the most team-based *Quake* mod here.

**Martin:** It finds a great middle ground between deathmatch and the kind of CS concept where if you die you have to wait until the next round. You have to work as a team because you don't keep respawning.

**Dave:** And if someone is shit you can just leave them to rot in jail.

**Martin:** Like Chris Anderson.

**Mark:** You get more satisfaction fragging someone knowing they're going to be stuck in a jail and it can be quite funny, too.

**Martin:** And now they've added lots of new modes within the mod itself, like Instagib. And the bots are very intelligent, they've improved them a lot recently. They try and get you out if you're in jail, which didn't happen in earlier versions.

**Anthony:** It's one you can play on your own, giving orders to the bots.

**Dave:** It all comes back to the maps though. The one with the lava in the middle – A River Runs Through It – is just superb.

**Mark:** One of my favourites is Dusty Basin. It's one of the best raiting maps ever. Really big with a pyramid look to it. You can rail people miles away. It's the only example of *Quake* making a massive outdoor space that actually feels like that, rather than

cleverly disguised corridors.

**Dave:** The concept has flaws though. You can end up with both teams sitting back and defending, or you can both attack and end up camping each other's bases.

**Mark:** Both teams have to agree to play it properly or it just gets stupid. We should mention the great jail executions.

**Anthony:** And there's no better feeling than releasing your buddies against all odds.

**Dave:** I don't understand why this mod isn't massive.

#### ALLIANCE

**Mark:** It's a bit like *Spider-Man* when you get used to the grappling hook.

**Martin:** It makes you approach the game in a different way because there's so many ways of getting places.

**Mark:** The bots are quite good too. They use the grappling hook all the time.

**Anthony:** It's nothing new though. There've been older mods that had one too, but *Alliance* just does it really well and it works.

**Mark:** But it is just Capture The Flag in the end.

**Dave:** It would have been better if you couldn't grapple when you had the flag, because people can just disappear through the roof and you can't get them. It would make it more of a team game. They'd have to defend you when you had the flag.

**Anthony:** That's true. The power-ups are quite good though. You can only have one



ILLUSTRATION Joe Roberts



Get to grips with that grappling hook and make like Spider-Man.

**“There's no better feeling than releasing your buddies against all odds”**

ANTHONY ON JAILBREAK: POW





You'll either love or hate the new collection of weapons.



Painkeep manages to be fast, fun, dumb and annoying all at once.



at a time but you don't lose it until you die. There are at least two or three brilliant maps. And the bots are up and down the walls like monkeys. Targeting your enemies becomes much harder because they can move in any direction at any time.

**Dave:** I wasn't too keen on the new weapons. Rockets seemed to do too much damage.

**Martin:** It's all much more unpredictable than your usual CTF. Normally there's only one way out when you've got the flag, but here it could be anywhere. You need to get used to the grappling hook, it's a little disorientating at first.

**Anthony:** But you just keep getting better and better the more you use it. The other good thing is the colour-coded proximity mines that only explode when the other team go past them. The bots wire the whole place to blow straight away. And then you have to

avoid them by grappling over Tarzan-style.

### PAINKEEP

**Mark:** This is basically just normal deathmatch with new power-ups and weapons.

**Anthony:** I love it.

**Dave:** Some of the things they added are good but others are muck. The sentry guns are just stupid, they've got no place in a deathmatch game.

**Martin:** And they attack you as well, which is just pointless. You want to lure people to it but you get shot too.

**Anthony:** I think you've both missed the point. It's not meant to be a tactical game where you lay traps and lure people in. The emphasis is on fun. It's not about pure skill, it's about having fun.

**Mark:** And the sentry guns are not as annoying as the bear traps.

**Dave:** That's the second thing on my list of muck things.

**Mark:** I never knew when they were a trap and when I could pick them up.

**Martin:** But you can place them strategically, like at the other end of a teleporter.

**Dave:** But it's not a slow game where you can think about where you're treading. You're

it's about, it's not about who gets the highest score, it's about fun. I'd like to think we still play games for fun.

**Everyone:** Nahhh!

**Dave:** The gravity well is brilliant and the air fist is fantastic. You can repel rockets and everything.

## "I wasn't too keen on the new weapons. Rockets seemed to do too much damage"

DAVE ON ALLIANCE

running around and suddenly you've got three bear traps on you and two sentry guns. It's not funny at all.

**Anthony:** I think you just don't like it because you're crap at it.

**Dave:** (Smugly) I'm very good actually. And the pork and beans are quite fun. You get health, you fart, you jump up in the air. It's reasonably funny.

**Mark:** For about five seconds. It's just childish toilet humour.

**Dave:** But this is a mod for people who aren't very good at deathmatch. You can get loads of kills dropping things around.

**Anthony:** But that's not what

**Anthony:** And if you drop from a great height and are going to crater you can use it to stop your fall. But it isn't new either.

### ROCKET ARENA

**Mark:** This is all about one-on-one deathmatch. Each map has several arenas and it's basically, winner stays on, while the loser moves to the back of the queue. Duelling is what serious Quake is about.

**Martin:** But it can get boring waiting for your turn, watching someone else.

**Dave:** I quite like watching good players go one-on-one,

it's really interesting.

**Mark:** You do need evenly matched players in this situation though, it's not like a free-for-all where everyone can get a few kills in.

**Dave:** But it's over quite quickly if you're much better. Because there's no health or armour to pick up (both players start with all weapons) each bout doesn't go on that long. And it comes with some great maps.

**Martin:** But Quake is all about getting into a rhythm, so if you go into a match cold you haven't got a chance against someone who's on a roll and can keep the momentum going.

**Mark:** But you can play in one of the other arenas while you wait to play the good people. It's all about skill and tactics.

The element of chance, of respawning in the right place and picking up the right weapon disappears.

**Anthony:** It has a long history. It was definitely a big mod for Quake II.

**Mark:** It's quite intimidating online. Just you against another person.

**Dave:** And everyone else is watching you. You have to

## MODS ON THE HORIZON



### WHAT'S THE NEXT BIG THING IN THE MOD WORLD?

"3.3 is the final version for Alliance," says its designer Mr White, but he promises more from the team in the future. Jailbreak is also a finished product, but new map packs are being worked on all the time and there's a possibility it'll be ported to other engines.

At the time of writing, the popular Rocket Arena was incompatible with the latest release of Quake III, but we're assured that they're just waiting for id to release the latest mod source code.

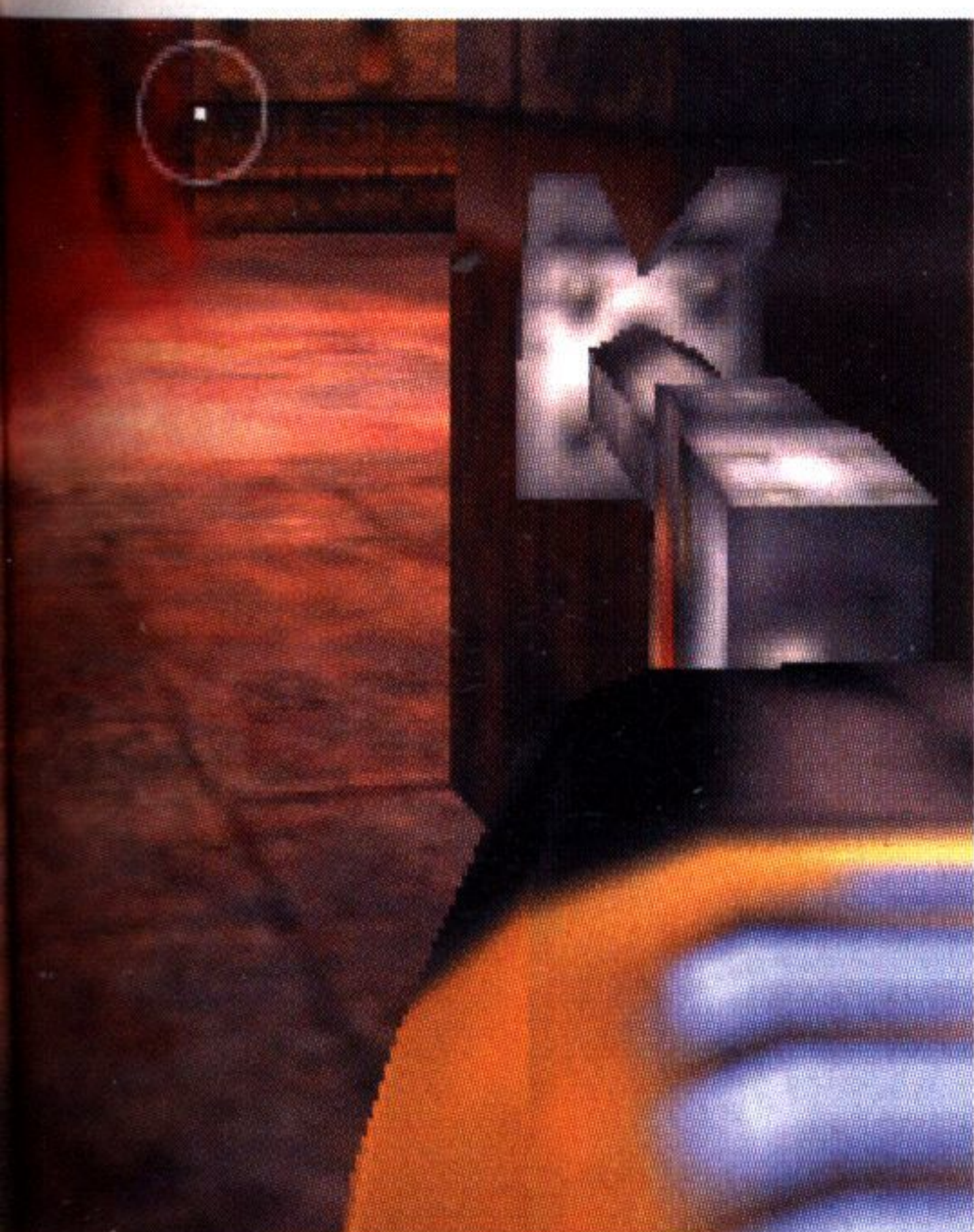
Painkeep Arena 3.0 should also be out soon, with a beta version having been undergoing testing for some time. But the future of Proball looks a bit murkier. "I have a list of things that I would like to do to it for a 2.0 sort of release, I just haven't found the time lately," says designer Bryan Dube. "I've also been contemplating porting it over to Soldier Of Fortune II, since I now work for Raven and worked on the multiplayer component. Glad to see there is still interest in Proball though. I wish there was a bigger community, but alas it never really took off." Maybe next time it will.



Duelling is not for beginners, especially if you end up on a server populated by top players.

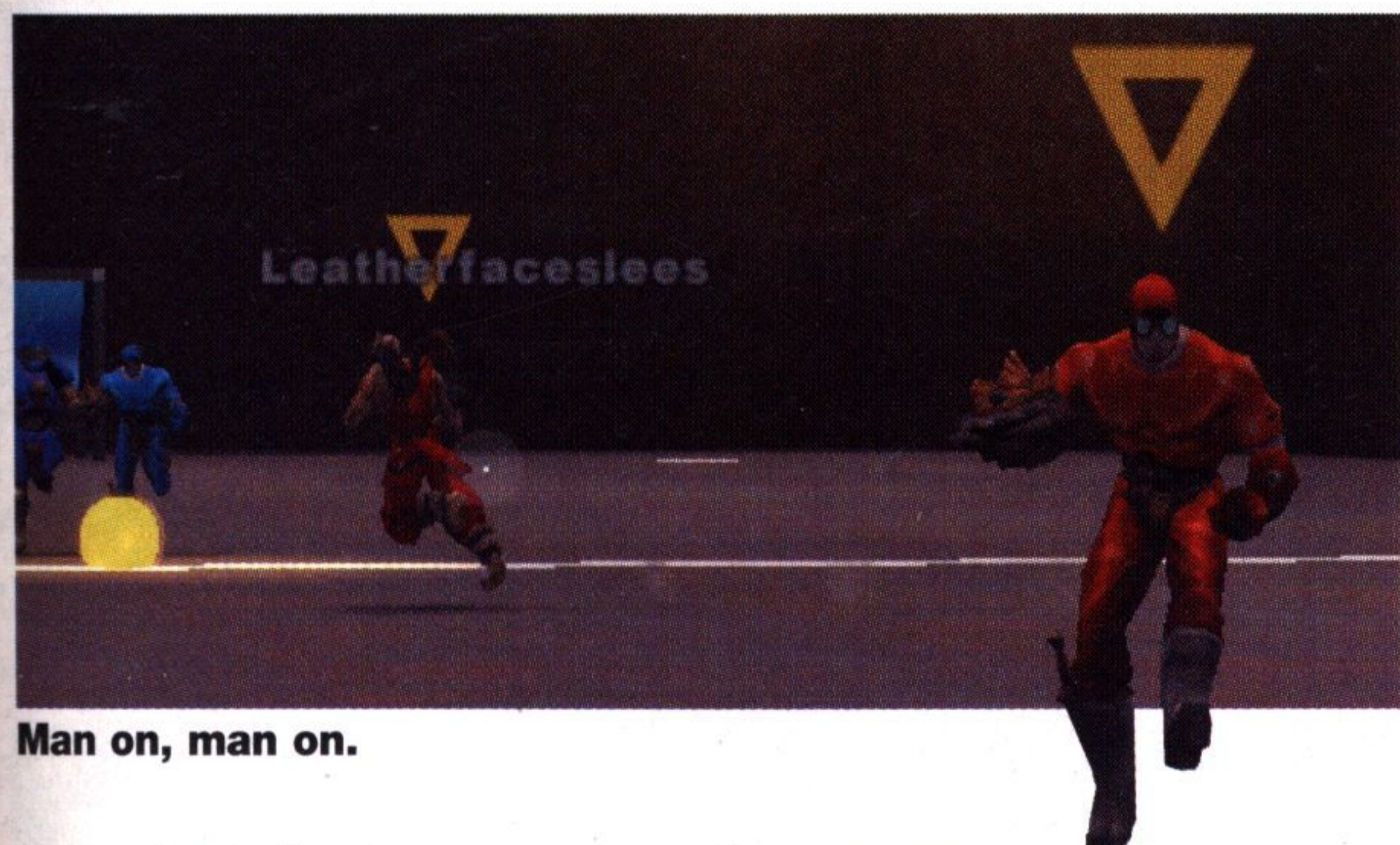






**"It's the one game here that will make you laugh over and over"**

MARTIN ON PROBALL



Man on, man on.

be good to try it out.

**Mark:** Duelling is all about tactical play and circling each other for a shot.

**Anthony:** Dave just runs after you constantly firing rockets twice as fast as normal people.

**Dave:** You have to be aggressive against railgun players.

**Anthony:** I think it would be better with bear traps...

## PROBALL

**Everyone:** (Cheers)

**Dave:** Again we seem to be the only ones going on about this. We discovered it about a year ago and we love it.

**Mark:** We should explain what it is first. It's like football...

**Martin:** Handball...

**Anthony:** It's just ball.

**Mark:** Pro-ball. It's incredibly simple, just two buttons like all the best sports games. It's like a first-person *Sensible Soccer* but futuristic.

**Martin:** But it's too simple, you can't even vary how hard to throw the ball. And it's too easy to take the ball off someone, you can't really lob over people.

**Everyone:** Yes, you can.

**Dave:** You can't say it's too simple. Three on three it's brilliant fun.

**Mark:** This is the template for the first-person footie game I keep saying they should make.

**Anthony:** There have been similar mods before but they were all crap because you could kill people as well. Part of the genius of *Proball* is that there are no weapons.

**Martin:** You should be able to

floor someone

though. When you get two good teams the ball just goes backwards and forwards all the time. But it's still brilliant fun.

**Dave:** You can actually get some really great moves together once you start passing the ball properly.

**Mark:** There is plenty of skill involved.

**Anthony:** And, unlike some of those other mods, you never lose sight of the ball. It's bright yellow and massive. And you can yell out to your team mates by pressing a button, which tells the player holding the ball "I'm behind you!" or whatever. The only problem is that the bots don't work.

**Mark:** The poor bots just don't know what's happening. "Where's my weapon?" "What's that big yellow thing bouncing towards me?"

**Martin:** It's the one game here that will make you laugh over and over.

**Dave:** If they slowed it



Forget FIFA this is the best sports sim on the PC.

down and let you choose the power of your throws it would be even better. The passing would come into it even more.

**Mark:** It is too fast. But the turbo balances things out. If you use up all your speed you can teleport back to your own goal.

**Dave:** I love it when they think they're about to score and you suddenly appear in front of the posts to take the ball off them.

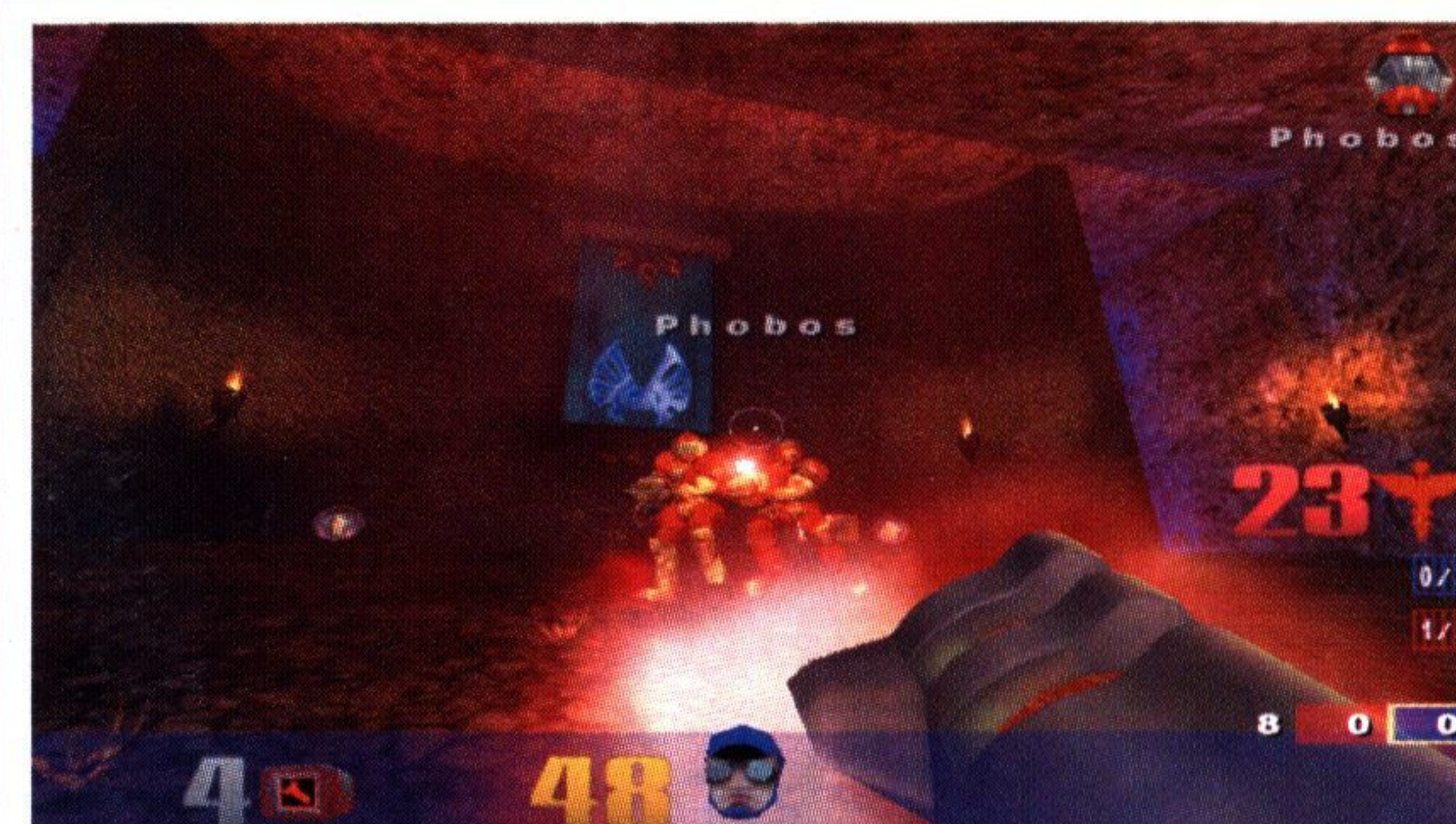
**Mark:** It has the best maps in the world: big boxes with nothing in them except for goal posts. And that's all you need.

**Dave:** This mod proves we're liars. We constantly say *FIFA* is the best football game on the PC, but this is much better. We should start a campaign to bring it into the awareness. If only *Speedball Arena* turns out something like this.

**Anthony:** But it's third-person...

**Mark:** Oh well... **EW**

## THE WINNER IS... JAILBREAK



### IT DOESN'T GET MUCH CLOSER THAN THIS

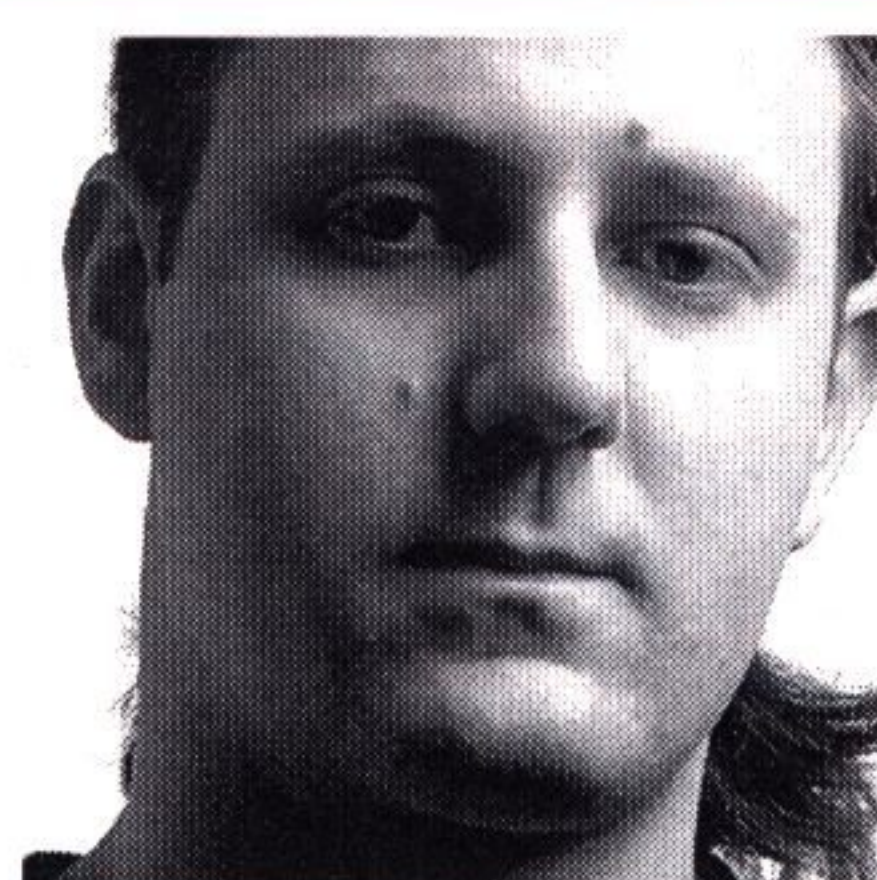
It's a narrow escape for *Jailbreak*, with two votes out of four, while *Proball* came a close second and gathered more votes over all. Only Anthony preferred another one: "*Painkeep* takes the basic deathmatch formula and puts the emphasis back on fun. All the additions are really good and I just love the bear traps."

For Mark it was *Proball* all the way: "It's the stupidest, simplest thing in the world on paper, but it works like a dream. It's probably the most fun I've had playing any sort of *Quake* at all, a brilliant laugh."

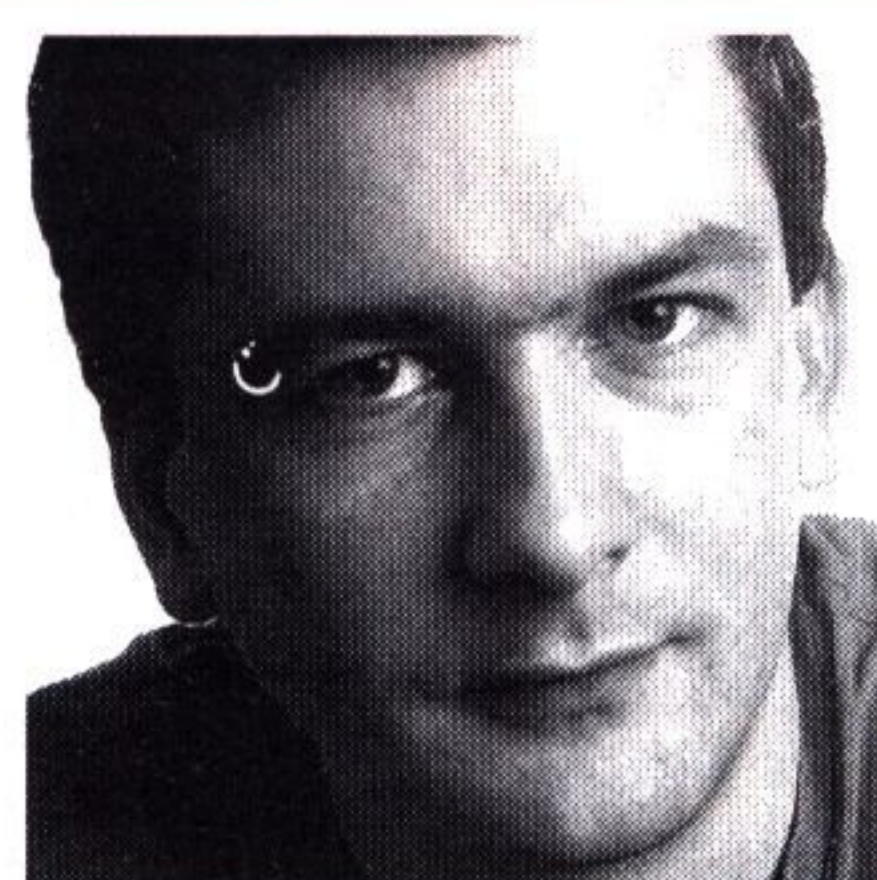
But *Jailbreak* won both Martin and Dave over. "It's the perfect balance between teamwork and deathmatch," says Martin. "The level design is great and the bots work really well." Dave agrees: "It's really easy to get into, but *Proball* is great too." As ever, decisive words from our editor.

## THE VERDICT

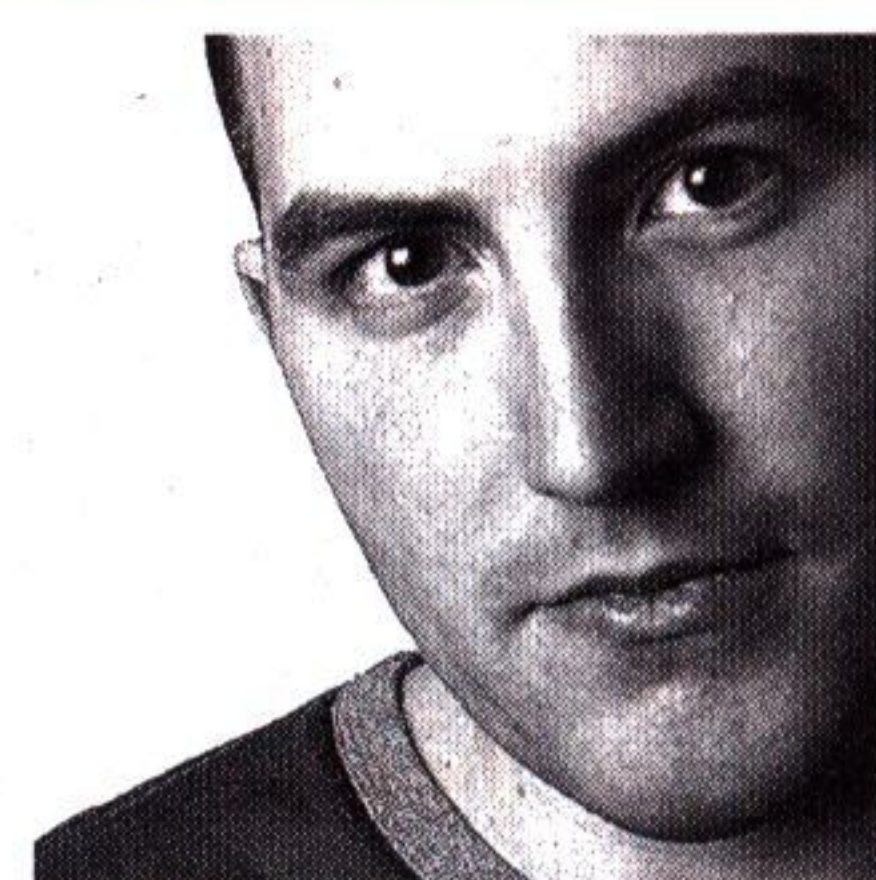
YOU CAN TELL FROM THE MUGSHOTS THEY SHOULD BE IN JAIL



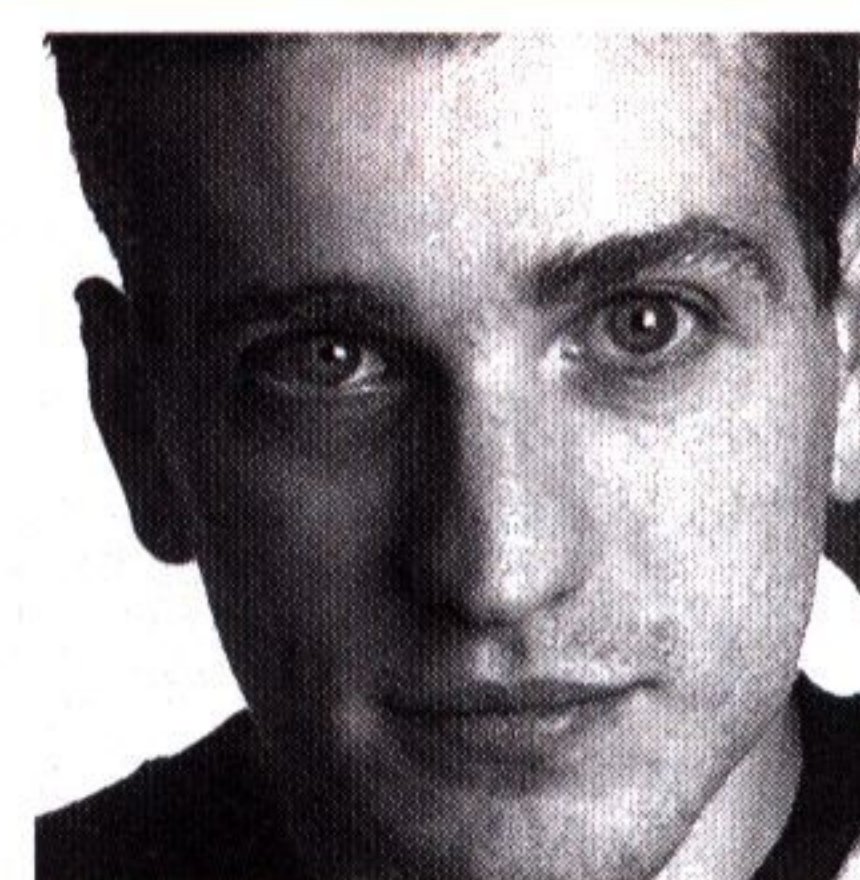
**MARTIN**  
Jailbreak  
Proball



**DAVE**  
Jailbreak  
Proball



**MARK**  
Proball  
Jailbreak



**ANTHONY**  
Painkeep  
Proball

BEST GAME  
RUNNER-UP





Resident scapegoat and all-round bad shot Steve Hill gets in some serious SWAT practice.

# REALITY CHECK: SWAT TRAINING

**Steve Hill employs special weapons and tactics – very badly**

## THEIR MOTTO IS

Uncompromised Duty, Honor and Valor. No it's not the boys at *PC ZONE*, it's the Los Angeles Police Department Special Weapons and Tactics Team. One man who knows more than most about them is 53-year-old team leader, Ken Thatcher. In 26 years on the force, Ken has been there, done that, got the bullet-proof vest.

So what is a trained killer doing in a Bournemouth hotel,

making a presentation to a roomful of the good, the bad and the ugly? Ken has come to England to teach the rudiments of SWAT procedure to a group made up of the Argonaut development team, a smattering of journalists and the obligatory PR chaperone. In two days – one theory, one practice – he is hoping to turn a bunch of pasty-faced slugabeds into a crack team that's capable of storming

buildings, rescuing hostages, and apprehending violent suspects. Because you get a lot of that sort of thing in Bournemouth.

If you've seen SWAT teams in the movies, it may seem as if they're simply steaming in with little regard for either tactics or personal safety. The truth is far removed from this though, and even extends to the how you carry your weapon. You won't see a proper SWAT cop holding his gun across his chest, as unlike in Hollywood, he doesn't have to keep it in frame. In the real world, weapons are pointed downwards, the argument being that any negligible discharge could have your eye out. There are also strict procedures for opening doors, clearing rooms and deploying such tools as CS gas and so-called flash-

bangs, the earsplitting pyrotechnics designed to disorientate suspects.

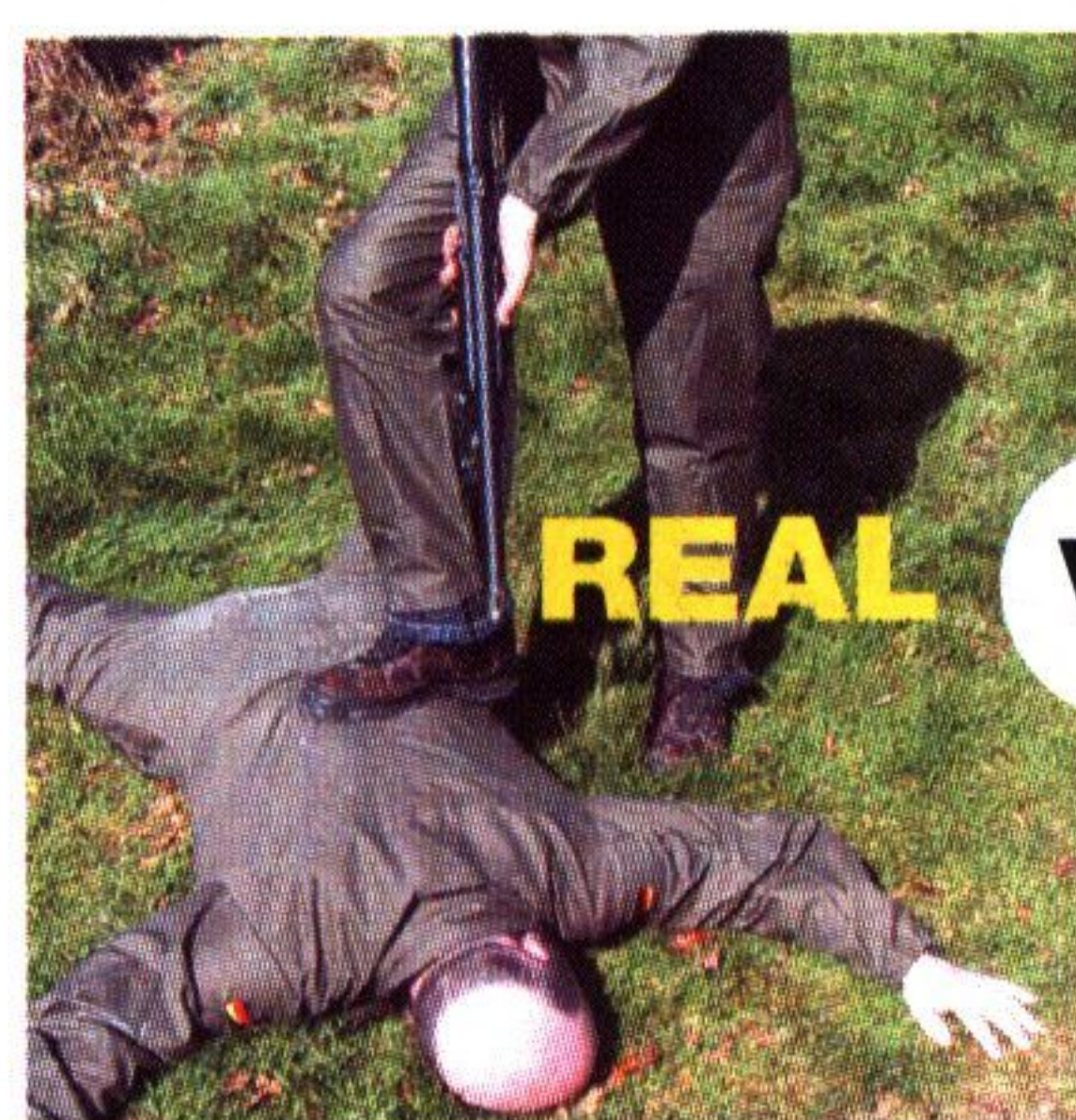
## BRAIN DRAIN

Following lunch, Ken treats us to some videos of his career highlights, including a 45-minute North Hollywood shootout with two heavily armed bank robbers. With the siege reaching its conclusion, Ken instructs us to keep an eye on the last remaining felon, as he's about to self-inflict. Before anyone has worked out what self-inflict means, the surrounded thief places the business end of an automatic weapon under his chin and blows the roof off his head off. Ken punches the air in mock celebration as brain and skull shower the sidewalk. I'm only glad I gave the sausage rolls a miss.

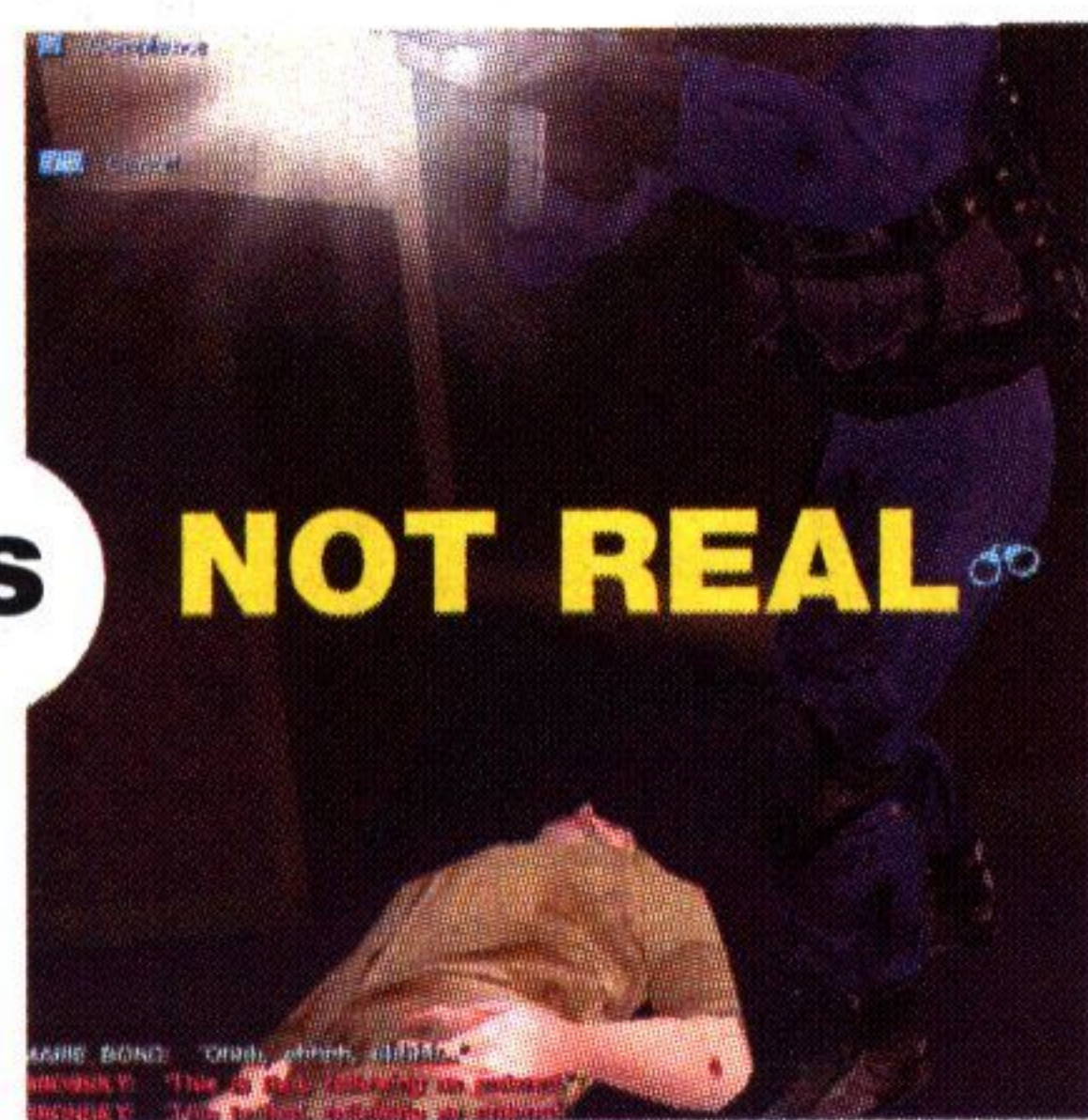
More theory follows, and with the lecture approaching a staggering nine hours, attention is waning. While Ken again explains the basics of covert entry, I seize the opportunity for some stealth moves of my own, easing my way towards the door and making a comic bid for freedom, finding refuge in the sanctity of the hotel bar.

## BREACH, BANG & CLEAR

An early roll call the next morning sees a busload of window-lickers headed for a deserted RAF base, where dilapidated buildings provide an ideal venue for a bit of SWATtery. Expensive replica guns await, capable of firing plastic ball-bearings fast enough to necessitate the wearing of goggles. Several dry runs follow, and a lesson in room-clearing is



VS







Steve kitted up and ready to kick some arse.



The day starts well...



...but ends in disaster.

brought home when a glance upwards reveals Ken, who has remarkably ensconced himself in the beams of the building.

When we are finally allowed to get our hands on the guns, I am appointed team leader of a group of ten, with orders to breach a building, rescue any hostages and apprehend the armed suspects (OK, posters stuck to sheets of polystyrene). Bursting through a side window, I urgently bark orders to my team, who split into pairs and expertly clear each room. With only seconds to identify friend or foe, it's a tense business, and a

calm head is required. It's a masterfully executed operation, and with every room secured, only one corridor remains. A single shot rings out, and I turn the corner to see a distraught recruit sheepishly wielding a shotgun inches away from what used to be the face of a small boy. Not a complete success then.

#### FALLING OFF A LOG

However, what would have been a tragic end to the day is later overshadowed by events far more sickening than the accidental shooting of a paper

child. With the majority of the group taking the opportunity to soak up a few rays, the absurdly energetic Ken declares that we seem to be lacking enthusiasm, and – contrary to what we had been promised – decides to put us over a military assault course, replete with custom-made areas for target practice. One recruit never makes it that far though. As I mount the first obstacle – a raised log – my undersized overalls tighten, causing me to land off balance, hitting the ground at pace and slumping onto my shoulder with a sickening crunch. Attempting

to continue, I am overwhelmed by nausea, and begin shaking like a dog shitting glass. The last thing I see is the contorted face of the overjoyed PR guy, laughing maniacally like a twisted hallucination as searing pain shuts down my system.

Seven hours later, I am released from hospital, with a snapped collarbone. Fuck real life, I'm sticking to games. Reality Check has been cancelled until further notice, or at least until my bone heals and Korda thinks up another hair-brained escapade to send me on that's worth getting out of bed for. **EW**

**"With only seconds to identify friend or foe, it's a tense business, and a calm head is required"**

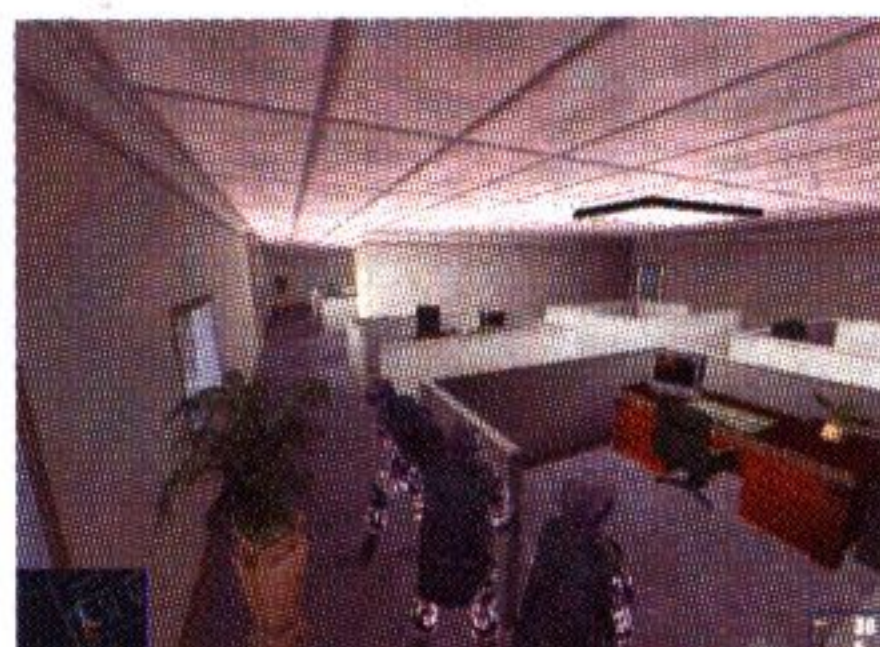
## HOW REAL IS... TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX?

### TENSE AND TACTICAL, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE LOCATIONS?

They might not actually be called a SWAT team, but Rainbow are virtually identical to the Counter Terrorist Unit, appearing in the guise of the original *Rainbow Six* and *Rogue Spear* (plus mission packs). There's also a stand-alone game available in the shape of *Rogue Spear: Black Thorn*. They might lack the lingo and the real world locations of *SWAT 3*, but the tactics are certainly comparable, and in a sick twist, *Rainbow Six* even features an obstacle course, replete with log hazard.

SCORE

Rainbow Six's best feature is the way that it replicates the tense and claustrophobic feel of real life SWAT missions. The latest Tom Clancy offering *Ghost Recon* also scores about the same in the reality stakes, but it often lacks the closed in claustrophobic feel of either its real-life equivalent or any of its predecessors.

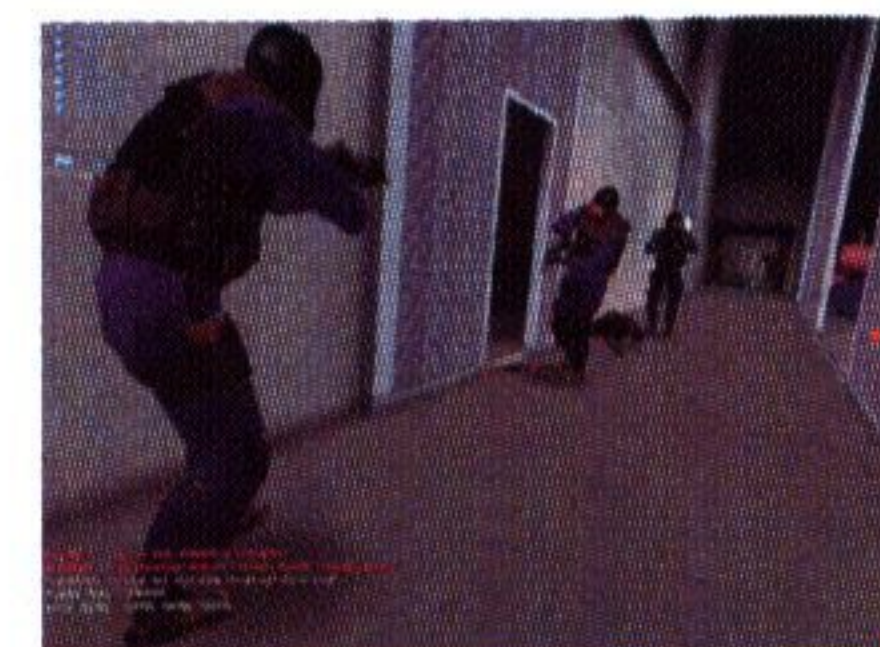


## HOW REAL IS... SWAT 3?

### MR THATCHER'S WET DREAM

Considering that Ken Thatcher was technical advisor, provided the motion capture, and even 'appears' in the game as the thinly disguised Kenneth Thrasher, it's safe to say that it has a certain amount of authenticity. But as Ken admits: "It's just a game and they can only do so much with computers. Some of the movement is called unrealistic when people that know anything about the tactical community see it." For recreating the sense of urgency and bewilderment though, it certainly does the trick.

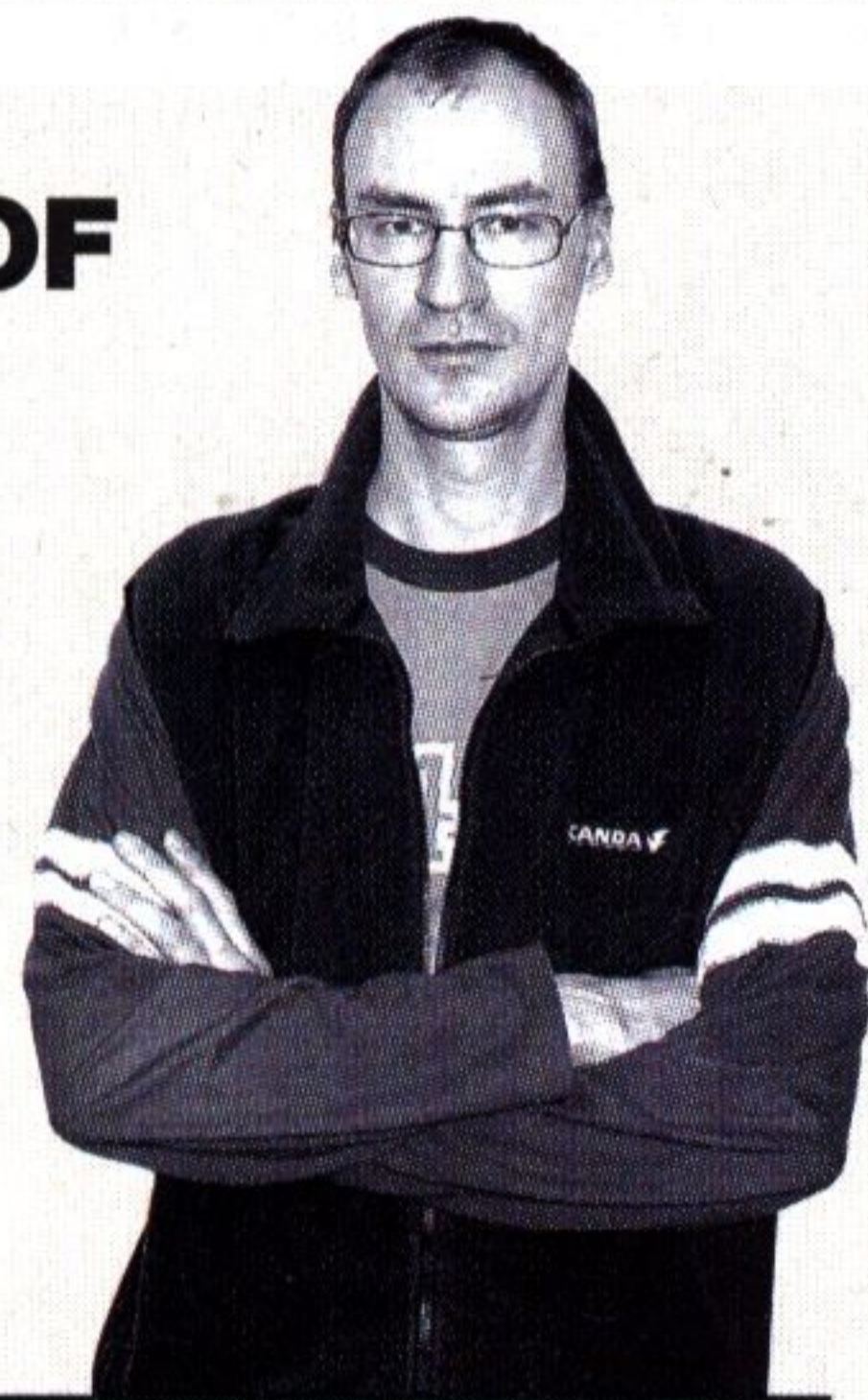
SCORE





# HARDWARE

## HOUSE OF CARDS



■ **HARD WIRED** Tim Ponting

I was sitting down discussing the articles for inclusion in the next few issues with our esteemed editor when I realised that Hardware Zone was in danger of being renamed The Processor and Video Card Section.

It's not a deliberate bias. Each month, we trawl around and see what interesting things pop up – and perhaps more significantly what's timely and important.

Video card technology, as NVIDIA is so fond of telling us, is progressing at the pace of Moore's Law cubed. Gordon Moore, the founder of Intel, predicted that the number of transistors on a processor (ie performance) would double every 18 months – and he's been proved right where CPUs are concerned. But apparently, graphics chips aren't showing him the same respect.

So it's hardly surprising, given the pace of change, that the new and exciting stuff which we feel we should tell you about immediately is video card chipset-related. In fact, this month we even decided that a four-page exposé of Matrox's stunning new chipset should be ranged alongside 3D/Creative Labs' P10 announced last month, instead of a joystick round-up (which will come soon). And believe me when I say the next announcement from NVIDIA will need just as much coverage.

In stark contrast, just about every other technology relevant to gamers is moving at a snail's pace. Please tell me, when was the last time you felt a new joystick was the most exciting purchase on your wish list?

## AMD AND INTEL WOO E3

**After conquering the business world the chip giants are after your cash**



UT 2003 provides supports for P4 optimisations.

**THE BATTLING** chip giants were at it again this month, both choosing E3 as a platform for announcements squarely targeted at the gaming market. But interestingly, they took very different stances.

First to Intel. Both the company's press release and physical presence at E3 were considerably less staid than usual. Intel chose to kick off with the revelation that (in the USA at least) 42 per cent of gamers are women. "If you think your mother does only email or shopping online, think again," proclaimed

Intel's press release. It then went on to explain that increasing power on the desktop is what has broadened the PC's appeal. Sheesh, and we thought it was *The Sims*.

Next up, Intel managed to take the higher ground on raw computing power. Its new 2.53GHz Pentium 4 is generally accepted to be faster all-round than AMD's current fastest processor, the Athlon XP 2100+, clocked at 1.73GHz, and Intel has been no shrinking violet in terms of shouting this to the skies at E3. Its price, however, limits its current appeal to the power gamers among you with more spondulies than sense.

### OPTIMISE AND CUSTOMISE

More important, however, were the titles on show that incorporate support for Pentium 4 optimisations and instruction sets. The most significant of these is *Unreal Tournament 2003* – with the engine due to end up powering a range of 3D shooters over the next few years, it could prove a vital boost for Intel's technology.

Intel also showed its street cred by displaying PCs created by the mod community, 'driven' individuals who build super-overclocked super-computers super-cooled with water

systems and filled with super-neon lights and suchlike. While normal geeks tend to frown on such fripperies, 'case modding' has become quite an art, with PCs housing a chassis as unlikely as a toilet, or with intricate laser-cut cases where the water cooling and lighting systems are a work of art in themselves. Strangely, we're beginning to approve.

### AMD LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

AMD, on the other hand, is looking to the future – a crafty move considering Intel's current processor is faster – by rolling out friends in the graphics card community. It's persuaded 3DLabs, ATI, Matrox and SiS (but not NVIDIA) to announce that they're working on technologies that complement AMD's technical approach. Reading between the lines, AMD is laying out its stall to gamers, as if to say: buy next-gen Athlon, and all these graphics card manufacturers promise you won't be left out in the cold."

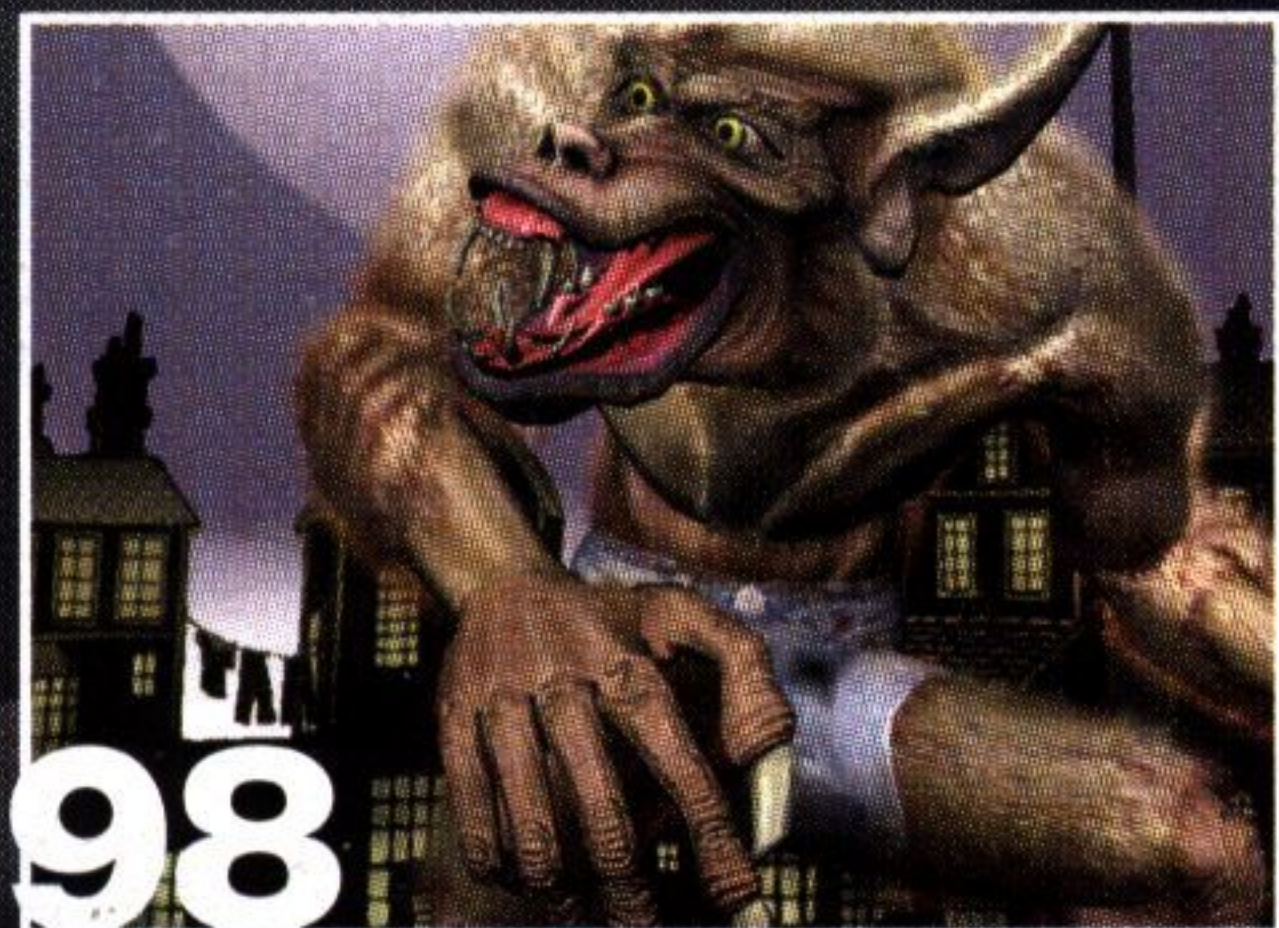
The significance for the ZONE reader? What was actually said was more marketing than meat. What's important is that both AMD (as ever) and Intel (for the first time in a while) chose E3 to give a big thumbs-up to the interactive entertainment market. However significant the showing off, posturing, and back-slapping may be, the very fact it happened is good news for Joe Gamer. They want our business.

**"The price of Intel's new Pentium 4 limits its appeal to power gamers"**

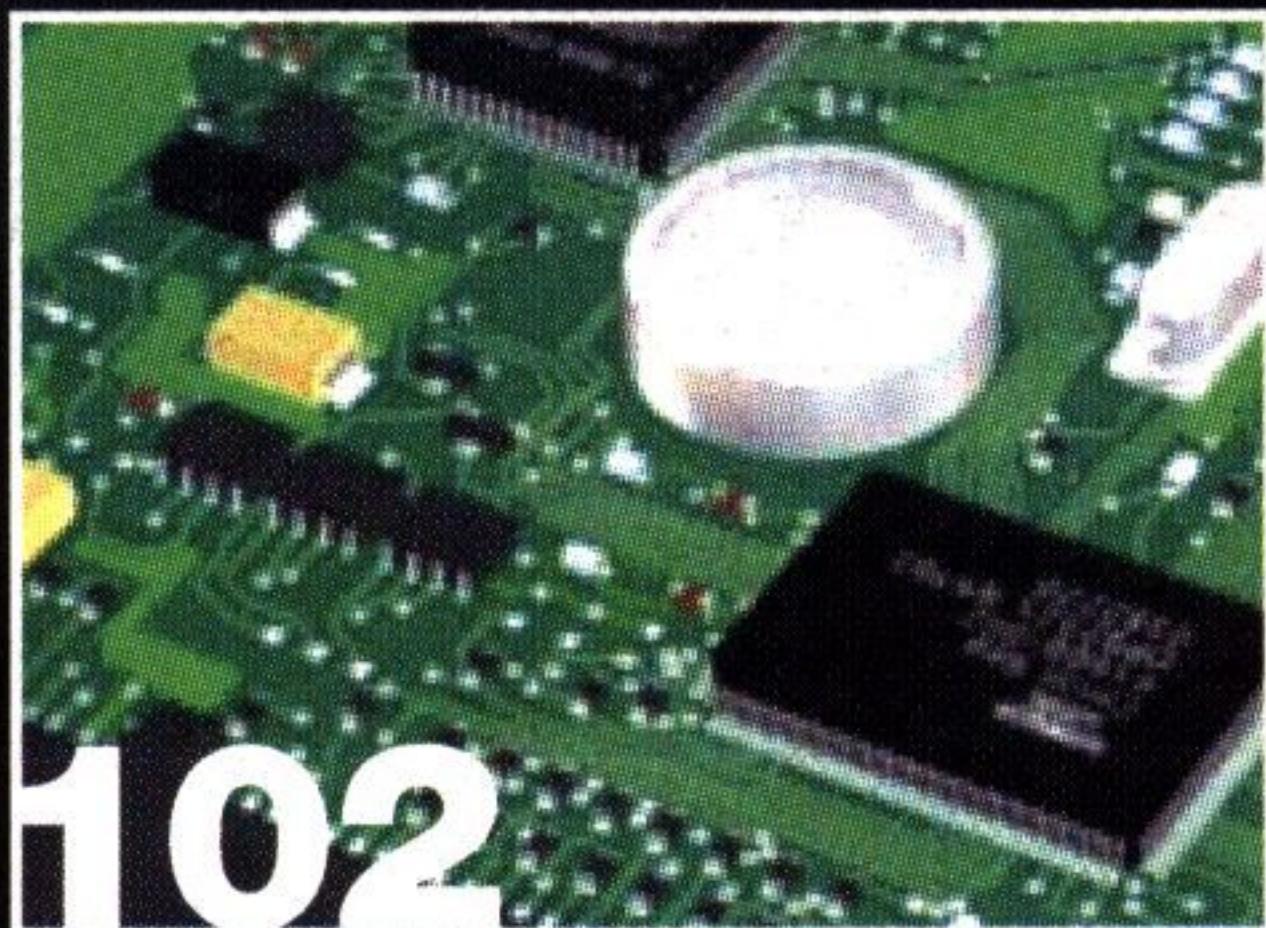
**The new breed of modders aren't content with creating new games – they want to modify the machines they play their games on.**







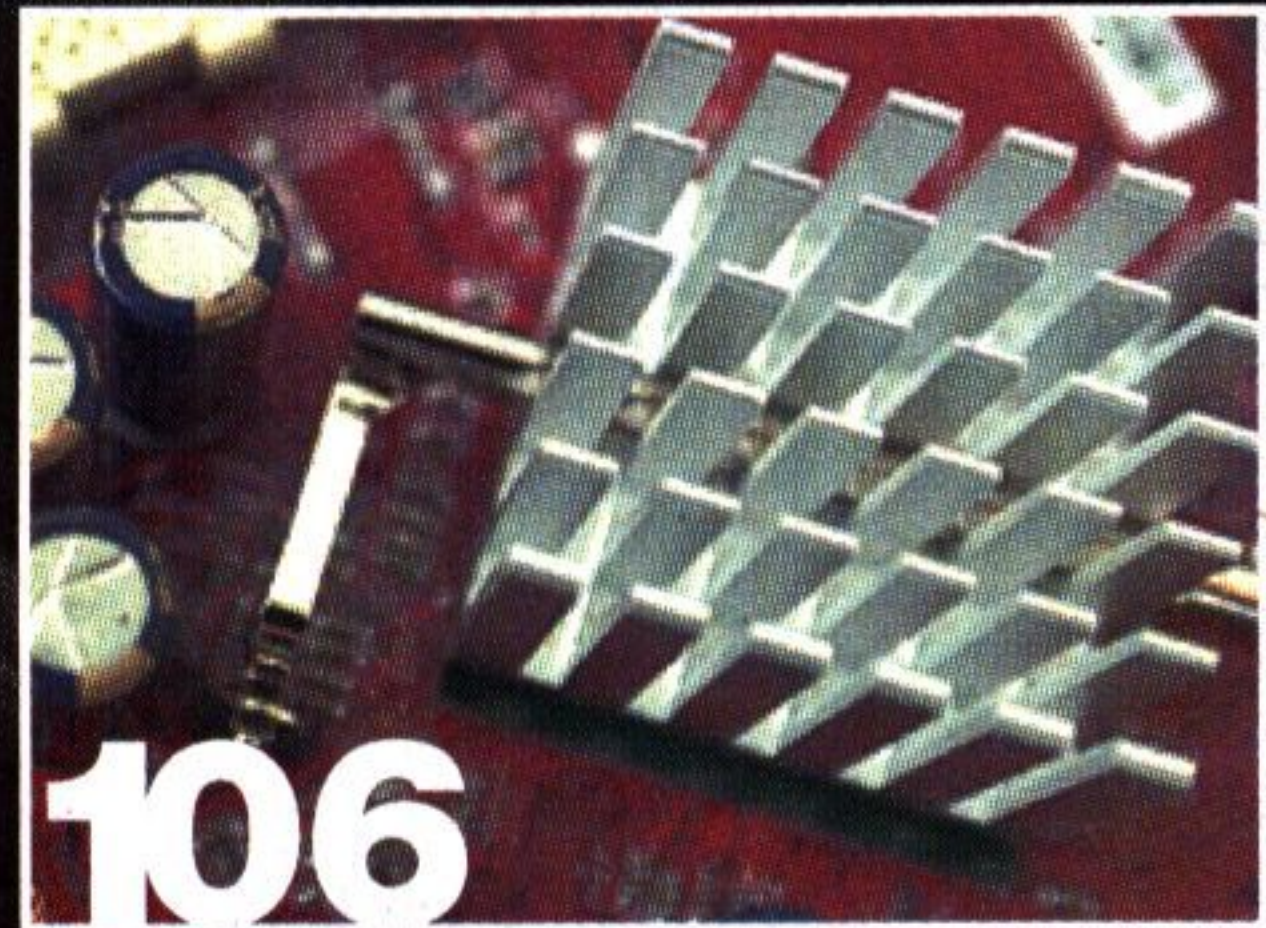
**98**  
**SPECIAL REPORT**  
A vision of the future



**102**  
**DEAR WANDY**  
Got a problem that you can't fix?



**104**  
**WATCHDOG**  
Companies from hell...



**106**  
**BUYER'S GUIDE**  
The best kit at the best prices

# CELERON ACCELERATES

Watch out for the new budget processors from Intel

**WHILE SO-CALLED** 'low-end' processors don't exactly set the world alight, it's a fact of life that you can't afford to buy both Stella Artois and 2.53GHz CPUs. And it's certainly true that both AMD and Intel have, of late, neglected the affordable CPU at the expense of a very public performance war. We've seen recent Durons and Celerons, and to be honest have found it pretty pointless to review either when for just a few squiddies more you can buy 'proper' CPUs.

All this could change soon as Intel has basically robbed its old



Pentium 4 core – the one codenamed Willamette – stripped out 128Kb of the original 256Kb cache memory and re-labelled it 'Celeron'. And get this – overnight, the fastest Celeron thus far jumps from 1.3GHz to a whopping 1.7GHz. Not only that,

but as it uses a P4 Willamette form factor – number and position of the pins sticking out the bottom – it can use better chipsets than the old Pentium 3-based Celerons.

## SLIMFAST

Slimming down the on-chip cache is the technique both AMD and Intel have used for their cheaper CPU ranges. It reduces

performance, sure, but we reckon a 1.7GHz Celeron will knock a cocked hat out of older Athlons or Pentium 3s by clockspeed alone. We await AMD's response keenly – one more Duron is promised before the company finally dumps them – but for the time being, Intel steals a march at the bargain basement end of the market.

## GLOSSARY

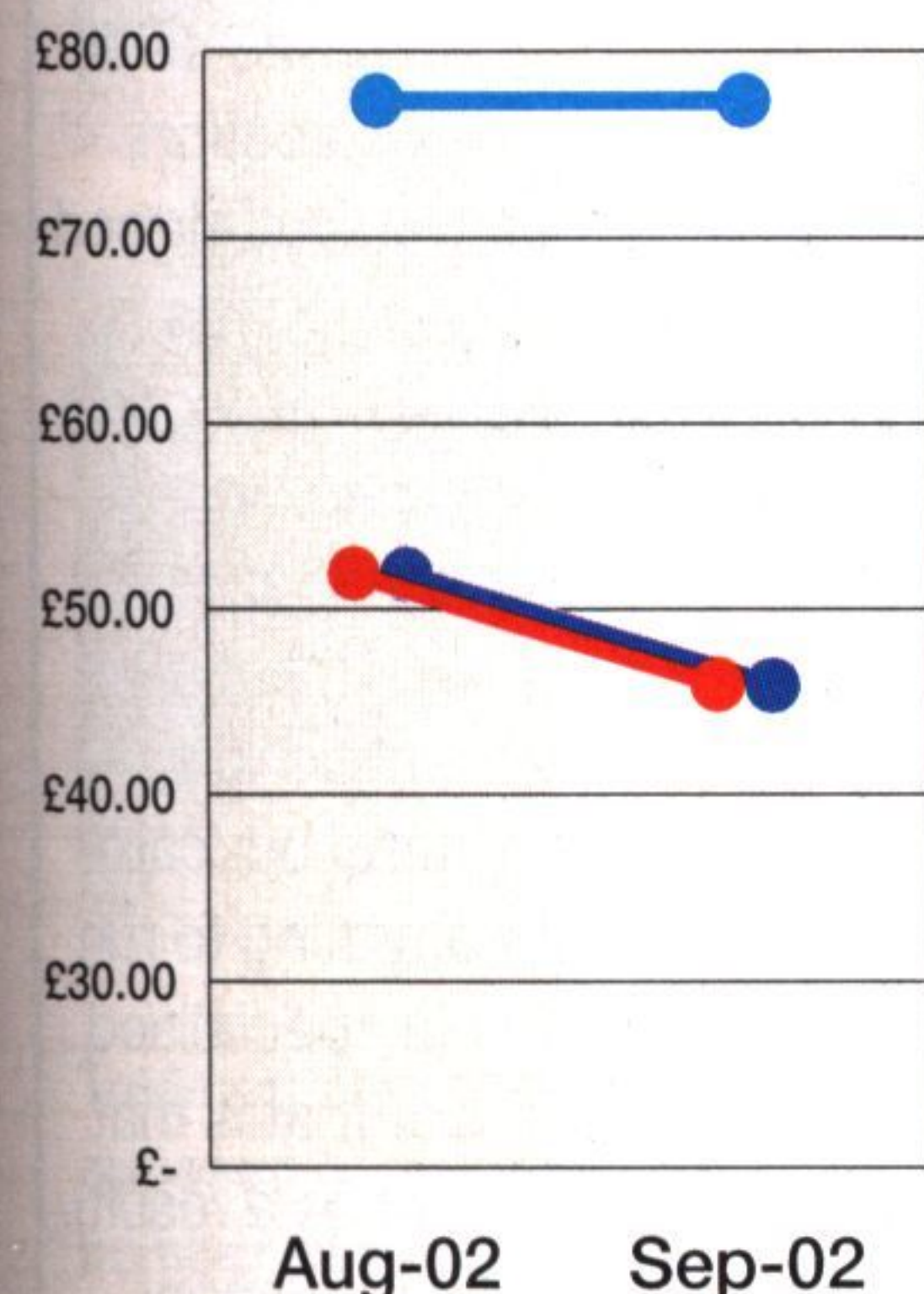
Cache – an area of memory, either within the CPU or elsewhere, which acts as a temporary storage area for frequently or recently accessed data – improving the efficiency of the process.

# PRICEWATCH

Keep an eye on our charts and you'll never be out of pocket

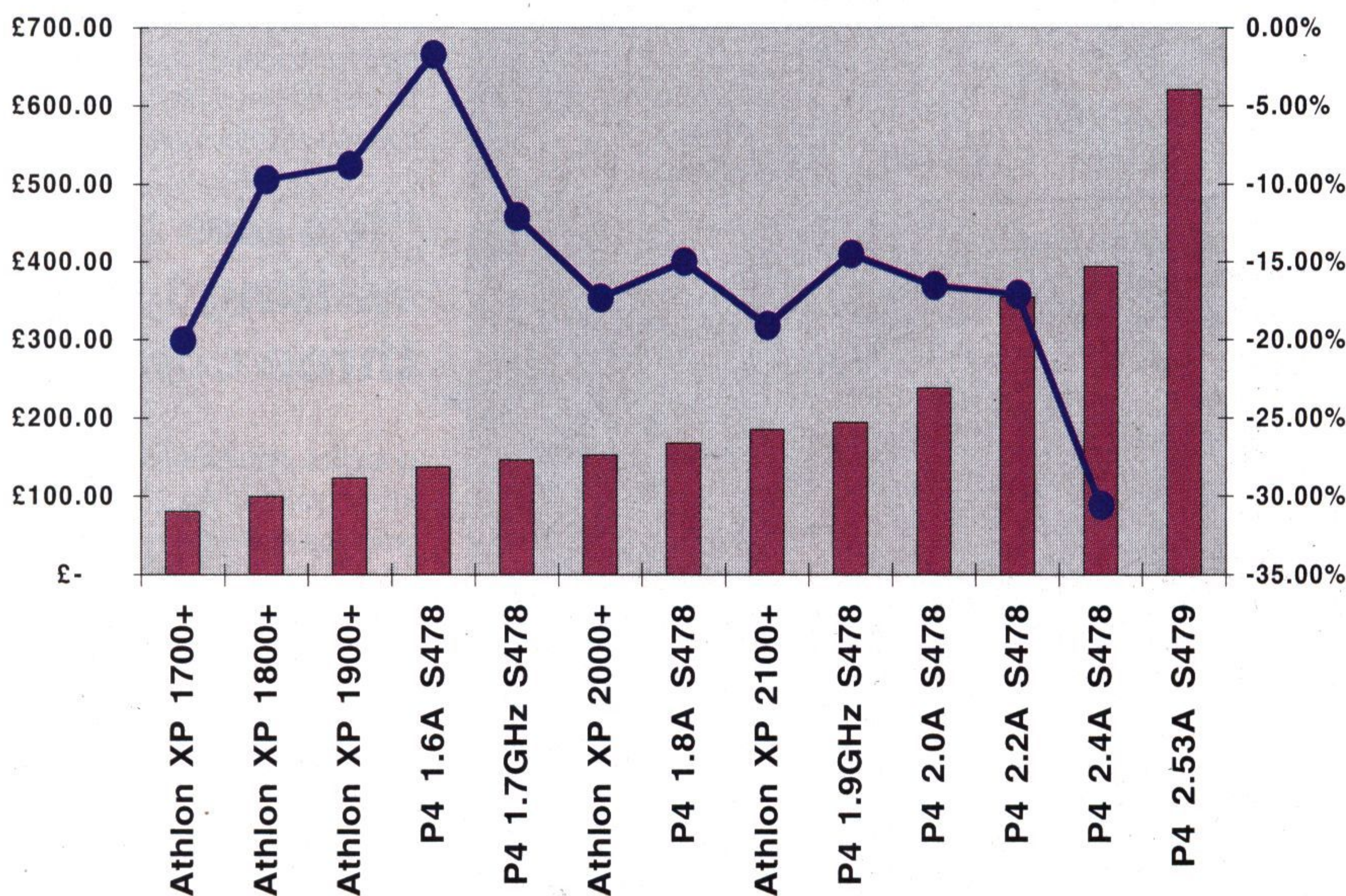
## MEMORY

As we predicted, memory has continued to drop in price, though Crucial is still standing firm on the new PC2700 prices – these DIMMs are still not commonplace. We reckon there's at least another month of drops to come – and bear in mind the magazine's lead time. If memory is a lot cheaper as you read this, it could be worth a move if you can afford it now.



Price per 256Mb RAM:  
● PC133 SDR  
● PC2100 DDR  
● PC2700 DDR

## PROCESSORS: PRICE AND PERCENTAGE DROP



## PROCESSORS

Quite a change in the 'percentage drop' portion of the chart this month. Intel has been very aggressive, dropping the price of its 2.4GHz Pentium 4

processor by a whopping 30 per cent. AMD has been almost as aggressive at the bottom end, and chopped its Athlon XP 1700+ to less than £80. All in all, this month has been great news

for you, the punter. For Athlon owners with reasonably recent Socket A motherboards, you can now upgrade to an Athlon 2000+ for around £150 – but check a BIOS upgrade can handle it first.

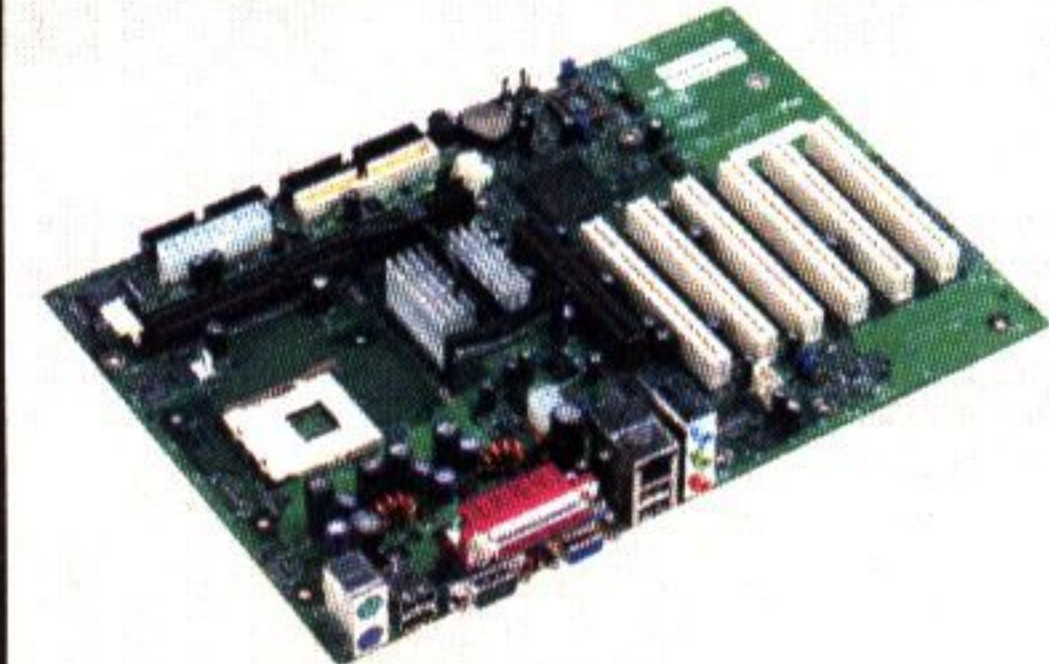
## SNIPPETS

### MX NEXT TO DX8



NVIDIA's next budget MX-based graphics cards are going to be DirectX 8 compatible. As most current games only use DirectX 7 technology, it's of little importance that the old GeForce 4 MX was a step behind; but apparently the 'budget' chips currently being planned to coincide with the launch of GeForce 4's successor, codenamed NV30, will also be DirectX 8-compatible. Which means they'll play the games previewed at this year's E3 with aplomb.

### 845 GEE WHIZZ



Intel has at last unveiled its i845G chipset and it's impressive stuff. You can plonk an Intel D845GBV motherboard into a PC and have video, 5.1 audio and networking without adding a single PCI card! The on-board video, named Intel Extreme, seems to fall between a GeForce 2 MX200 and MX400 in performance, so unless you're running older games in 16-bit colour at 800x600, you'll need a better card – but with some motherboards featuring unofficial support for PC2700 memory at 333MHz, this is a blinder of a board. And it'll take the new fast Celerons too.

### ASUS TI4400S



News reaches us that Asus is readying a board based on NVIDIA's GeForce 4 Ti4200 design, an NVIDIA-badged engineering sample of which was reviewed last month.

As allowed in NVIDIA's specifications, the card will be available in two flavours, one with 64Mb of memory and the other with 128Mb – placing it in the same memory leagues as the more expensive Ti4400 and Ti4600, which both have 128Mb as standard.

To keep the pricing sensible, the 128Mb card will have slower memory than the 64Mb card. We suspect that the card with the smaller memory will run faster with older DirectX 7 games that have textures designed to fit comfortably within a 64Mb card, while the 128Mb card could come into its own with next-gen games.





## SPECIAL REPORT: A VISION OF THE FUTURE

Forget seeing double, the next generation of graphics cards will have you playing in triple vision. **Tim Ponting** examines the new technology from Matrox and 3Dlabs and wonders where it's all going to end

**WOW.** Geek heaven. It's like the old adage about waiting for a bus and then three (or in this case four) coming along at once.

That's right, while we wait for frontrunning graphics giants NVIDIA and ATI to wheel out

their next generation cards, out of the blue pop two revolutionary competitors in the shape of the the Matrox Parhelia 512 and the 3Dlabs P10. So what is so great about these revolutionary pieces of kit, and how do they work?

Although this is a bold new move from both companies, neither could be described as a new kid on the block; 3Dlabs produced the world's first consumer video chip for 3D

but this will be a graphics workstation product.

Consumer cards based on P10 technology, from Creative Labs (owner of 3Dlabs) won't arrive for a while yet – and the company is extremely tight-lipped about exactly when this will be. However, most observers expect them to appear by the end of the year at the latest, and as soon as is possible as far as Creative is concerned.

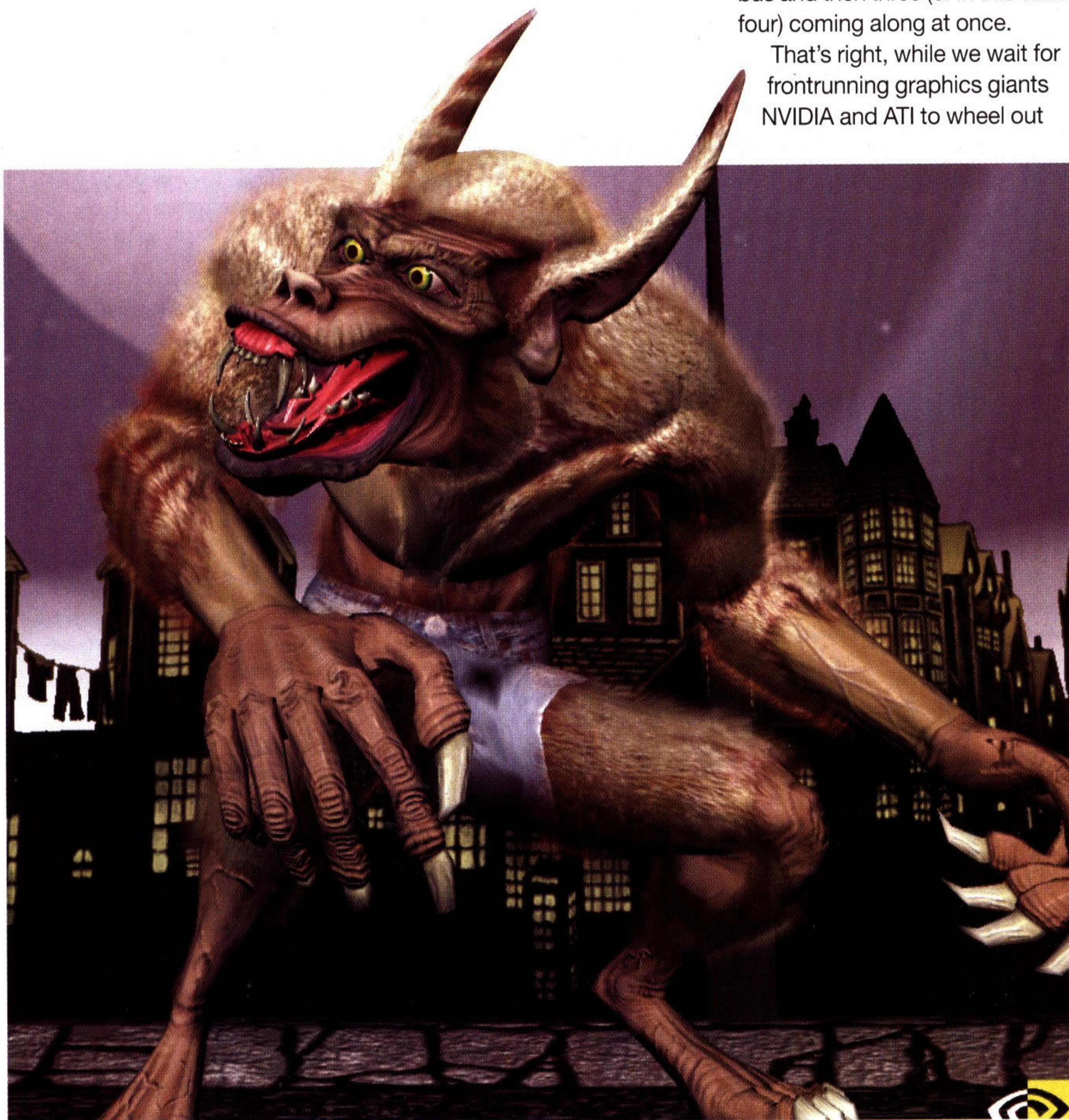
**“It's like the old adage about waiting for a bus and then three come along at once”**

graphics, and Matrox is still a major player in the 2D business graphics market, having effectively withdrawn from the 3D race when its G400 cards were eclipsed by the competition.

Both are intent on producing 3D chips that, in the short term at least, will trump both NVIDIA and ATI: a vital foothold in the market that could herald quite a shake-up. Matrox's first card is due around mid-July; at the time of going to press, 3Dlabs was due to make an announcement regarding its first board on June 10, with shipping expected in early July –

### THE FULL SKINNY

We covered P10 in some detail in last month's news section, but for those of you that missed it, here's a quick recap. The card is described as the world's first Visual Processing Unit, a reference to the fact that it combines the flexibility of a CPU (you aren't limited to a fixed set of programs but can write just about anything to run on it) and a GPU (a specialised graphics processor that is that much more efficient as a result). It also has a 256-bit memory interface (GeForce 4 and Radeon 8500 can only muster a 128-bit link), which means that the memory bandwidth –



NVIDIA's GeForce 4 is the current king, but Matrox and 3Dlabs are ready to take it on.



the amount of data that can be transferred from the memory on the card to the VPU per second – is twice that of the competition. It also has a clever 'Virtual Memory' system which revolutionises the way developers work with textures – they can now employ enormous texture maps, where before they could only work with much smaller units. It's also likely to be a great OpenGL 2.0 performer (big GL games include all the id games including *Quake III*, *Return To Castle Wolfenstein* and *Medal Of Honor*), as 3Dlabs is the main mover and shaker in the OGL consortium.

Matrox's Parhelia 512 shares much in common with the P10. It too has a 256-bit memory interface; it too is more programmable than current NVIDIA and ATI cards, though not to the same extent as P10. But it's also got some nifty tricks up its sleeve. It uses 10-bit colour depth from the moment data enters the card to its arrival on screen, reducing banding, and it supports gaming across three monitors (see Three's A Crowd boxout overleaf). And this could well prove to be a big thing in the future.

Neither card is a DirectX 9 part – there simply isn't room on either chip to accommodate the transistors to meet Microsoft's new standard. But both are considerably more advanced than DirectX 8 cards. So without further ado, say hello to the new kids on the block...

#### STICK THAT IN YOUR PIPE

Don't run away just yet – this might be pretty technical stuff but we're going to take it nice and easy and hopefully you'll end up learning a lot more about how every graphics card handles 3D operations, not just Parhelia and P10. At the very least it'll give you something to talk about down the pub now that the World Cup's over.

The path that the graphics-related commands and data take after arriving at your video chip is called the '3D Pipeline'. Though every card handles what it does at each stage in the pipeline differently, each has much the same stages – so we'll walk through the pipelines of Parhelia and P10 together, pointing out the differences as we go.

The first difference is that the P10 has a special stage before you hit the traditional pipeline.

This is the Command Processor – of no real significance to gamers, as it's basically designed to handle multiple 3D processes at the same time – the kind of thing you'll see in future operating systems such as Microsoft Longhorn. And gamers only run one game at a time, right?

#### TRANSFORMERS: VERTICES IN DISGUISE

The first stage in the pipeline is what is known as Transform and Lighting (T&L). Transforming is the process whereby the data about vertices (the corners of the triangles that make up the world and every 3D object in the game) is converted into a 3D scene. This takes lots of 'floating point' (non-integer) maths. These transformed vertices are now 'lit', that is all the lighting calculations need to be performed for each one. With video chips designed for DirectX 8 and above, T&L is handled by 'vertex shaders', special programmable maths units. The programmability is what allows some of the new DirectX 8 effects, such as swaying trees or breathing animals – simple programs running within the vertex shader

## "The Parhelia 512 supports gaming across three monitors... and this could be a big thing in the future"

units can alter the position or lighting of a vertex without the CPU having to handle the animation itself.

Parhelia has four 128-bit vertex shader units (hence Parhelia 512). They are similar to NVIDIA's vertex shaders – GeForce 4 Titanium has two – and so the card should be roughly twice as fast as a GF4 Titanium at a given clockspeed (number of instruction cycles the processor runs at per second).

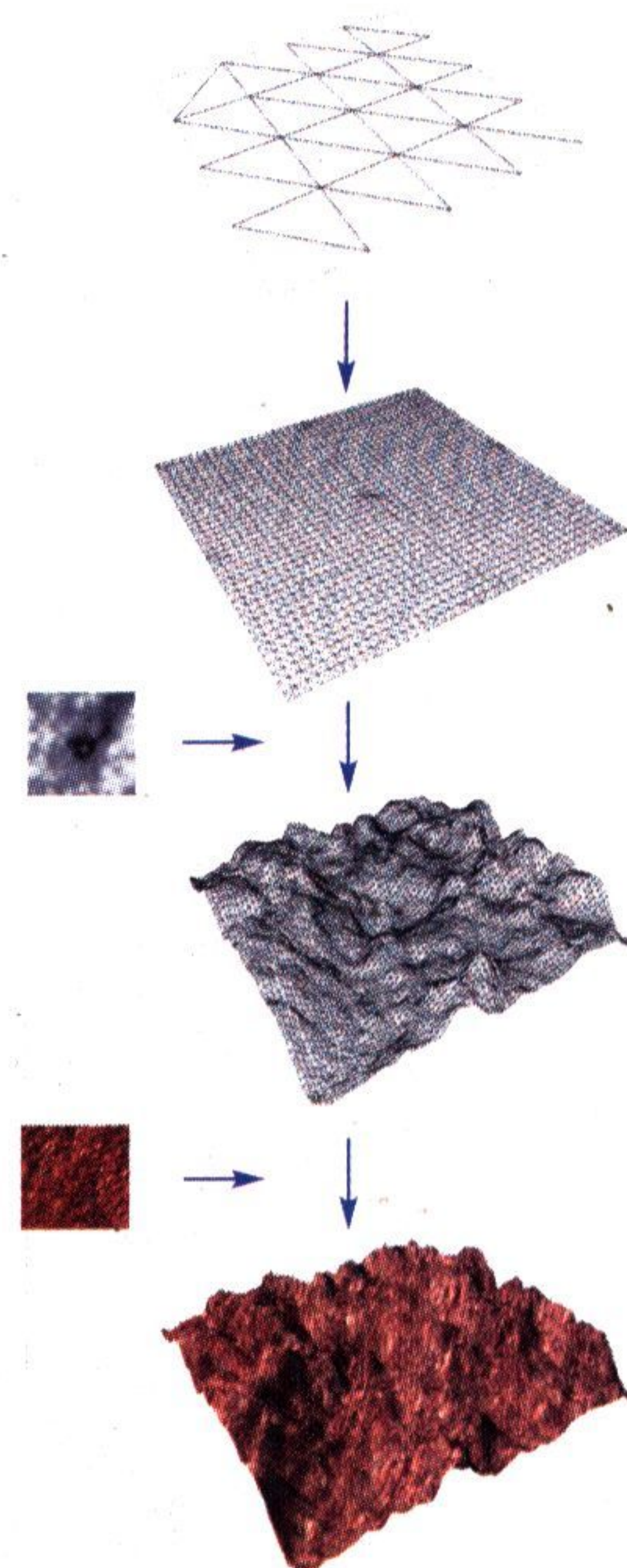
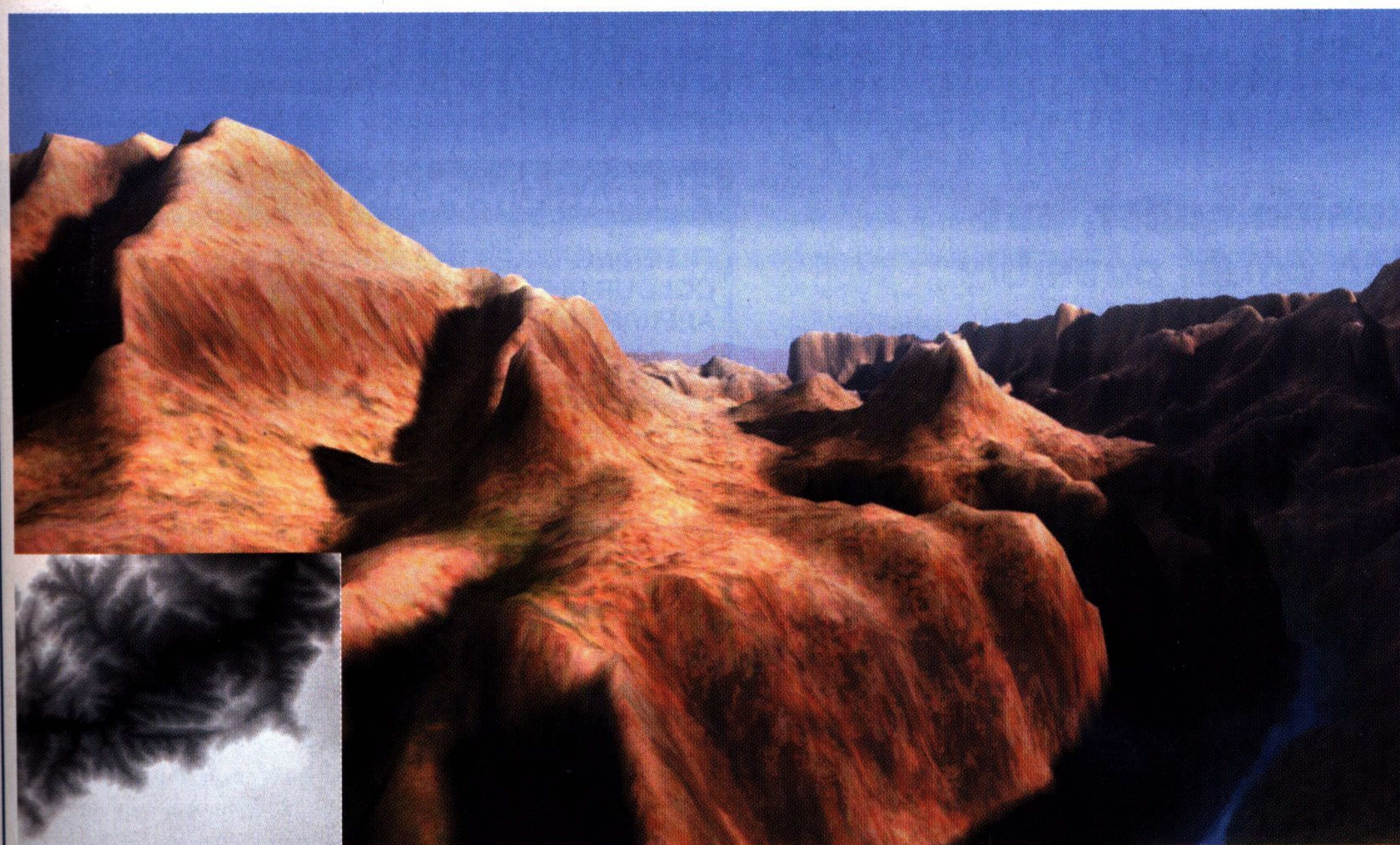
It's also at this point in the pipeline that Parhelia throws in a fabulous curve-ball – its 'optional' displacement mapping and depth-adaptive tessellation engine. (Look, we don't make these words up, we just work with the material we've got.) And this is such a biggie (and so complex) it gets its own boxout (see Hardware Displacement Mapping, above). To be honest, it's only relevant if games are written that support it, so you can safely ignore the boxout for



Parhelia should be around twice as fast as a GeForce 4 Titanium

## HARDWARE DISPLACEMENT MAPPING

THIS IS SO COOL, IT MAKES ME PROUD TO BE A GEEK. WE'LL CUT THIS DOWN TO THE BARE BONES TO MAKE IT EASY



Traditionally, rendering an item with complex 'shape' (as opposed to 'texture') detail requires you to increase the number of triangles used to make up that object. And this is expensive in terms of performance.

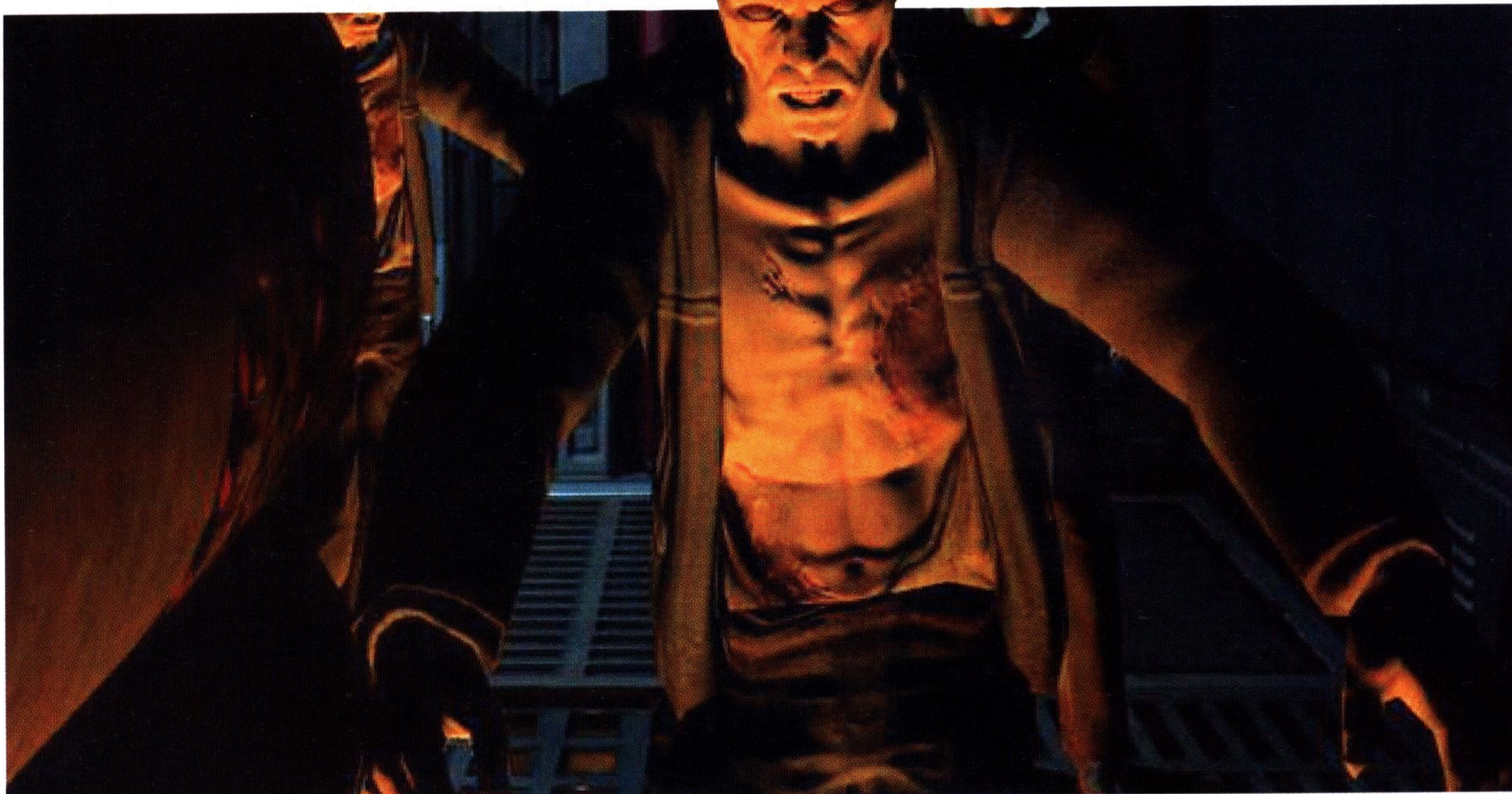
What HDM does is take a base 'mesh' (a simple set of triangles), divides it into lots of smaller triangles, then overlays a 'displacement map' on top. This is little more

than a simple 2D image where the brightest colour represents peaks, and the darkest, troughs. Overlay this onto the fine mesh (which has been 'tessellated' in jargon), and make the 3D co-ordinates of the fine mesh change according to this displacement map, and you can create complex shapes without having to pump vast amounts of geometric information from the computer to

the video card. Just look at the picture, it's nice and clear.

To make this even more efficient, the developer can use simpler displacement maps for objects further away from you, saving yet more precious resources. This employs the same principle as using simpler textures in games for objects further away. Let's hope developers use HDM – it's in DirectX 9, after all.





The *Doom III* video that was shown at E3 was apparently only running at medium detail. Even then we reckon this shows the future of gaming graphics and the new breed of cards featured here could be the catalyst for the next big leap in visual quality.

now if you want and read on.

The P10 takes a different approach to T&L. Instead of having four discreet vertex shader units, the P10 has an array of 16 general purpose Vertex Processors (VPs) all controlled by a single controller unit that assigns all the vertex shading instructions as efficiently as possible between the different units. How does this system compare with GF4 or Parhelia? For very techie reasons we won't bother with, this approach is better at handling a variety of mathematical operations – the others are optimised for one particular task. Four of P10's

VPs are effectively equivalent to one GF4 Ti or Parhelia vertex shader, so in theory, P10 has the equivalent of four vertex shaders. But because of its flexibility, performance should be slightly more than twice that of GF4 Ti.

The other thing about both the P10 and Parhelia vertex shading systems is that they claim to be compatible with the new vertex shader standard to be built into DirectX 9; NVIDIA is still at DirectX 8 stage. Phew. Still with me?

#### TIME TO DO THE HOUSEKEEPING

At the next stage in the pipeline, the graphics chip assembles and

prepares the 3D scene prior to conversion into pixels – the dots you see on your two-dimensional flat monitor screen that will eventually give the illusion of 3D.

This is a vital stage and one where a great deal can be done to conserve valuable resources later in the pipeline. The most important housekeeping task is called, among other things, 'occlusion culling'. Basically, a 3D scene may contain several objects that may be hidden in part, or whole, by another object closer to you on the screen. In a traditional system, known as an immediate rendering, you draw all the pixels of all of the objects in a scene, then consult the Z-

Buffer to see which is in the foreground for a particular position on screen and throw all the other pixels away. This is, as it sounds, very wasteful, as you can end up calculating for three times the amount of pixels that are actually displayed.

So at this housekeeping stage, many manufacturers apply occlusion culling to throw away as much invisible object data as possible. Both ATI and NVIDIA do this; Kyro has its own super-efficient system, which works differently. P10 has an occlusion culler, but Parhelia doesn't, which is possibly a chink in its armour. Given developers are writing for cards

that have this technology, they are worrying less about depth complexity (also known as 'overdraw') and hence Parhelia could begin to suffer as time progresses. It does, however, use a system to clear the Z-Buffer (depth information for objects) efficiently, as do NVIDIA and ATI.

All cards also discard object data that is either partially or completely outside the screen boundaries at this point in the pipeline. Now go make a cuppa.

#### AWAY WITH THE PIXEL PIXIES

Up to this point, we're talking in terms of objects in a 3D world; what you actually see on screen is a bunch of dots on a 2D surface, the computer screen. It's time to start converting all this geometry and lighting information into pixel data – this is the next stage in our pipeline.

At this point, both Parhelia and P10 insert four discreet 'pixel pipelines' arranged parallel to each other into the overall 3D pipeline. So, for that matter, do NVIDIA and ATI. There are four pipes in parallel simply to process as many pixels as possible at the same time.

Breathe deeply. More spoddiness approaching, but we're not going to go into each and every stage of the competing pixel pipelines in detail; instead, we'll just mark the significant differences.

First off – Parhelia is capable of applying four textures per pipeline per clock. P10, GF4 Ti and the Radeon 8500 can only

**"The P10 has an occlusion culler, but Parhelia doesn't, which could possibly be the chink in its armour"**



To get the end result of the fish shown in the centre, the Matrox card combines four texture maps into a single image, something it can process twice as fast as its competitors.

#### FILTRATION PLANT

**FILTERING TAKES THE SEPARATE BLOCKS OF COLOUR IN TEXTURE MAPS AND MAKES THEM APPEAR SMOOTH. THERE ARE THREE BASIC TYPES:**

##### • Bilinear Filtering

Adjacent texture elements within a texture map are 'sampled', then individual pixels 'corrected' so the final texture you see on screen isn't blocky. Remember how early 3D games used to look like patchwork quilts, particularly when you got up close? Filtering reduces this.

##### • Trilinear Filtering

The same principle is applied, but more samples are used, which gives better quality – and gives more of a performance hit. It's also applied at the join of texture maps with different levels of detail in them. Typically, a texture map will actually be available to the game in two or three different 'levels of detail' – this table of different textures is called a 'mip-map'. The small version is used on objects far away – the large version on objects close to you. Trilinear filtering blends textures with different mip-map levels so the division between the two isn't obvious.

##### • Anisotropic Filtering

Uses yet more samples again – and hits performance by the same token even more than trilinear filtering. Anisotropic filtering is used to get round a problem thrown up by bi- and trilinear filtering – namely that textures not viewed 'square on' become blurry when filtered. Anisotropic filtering is used to improve the look of texture maps when they're viewed from any angle. Very clever stuff.



apply two per pipeline per clock. OK, so what does this mean? Most games apply multiple textures to each pixel – for an example, check out Matrox's fish, made up of four texture maps combined. Each one of those pixels would require four textures to be applied before the pixel could be passed on further down the pipeline. It would take all the other cards twice as long to do the same thing. This is a bit of a simplification of the situation – what you can achieve 'per clock' is not the be-all and end-all – but it really gives a clue as to the power of Parhelia.

Many games don't use more than two textures per pixel – the *Quake III* engine being a good example – so this actually leaves

resources unused within Parhelia's pixel pipeline. But hang on – can't they be used for something else? Yep. If you know the game you're playing uses only dual textures, you can switch on trilinear filtering and get the same performance as other cards using just bilinear filtering. Or you can turn on anisotropic filtering, and get the same performance as other cards using trilinear filtering (see Filtration Plant boxout for an explanation of what this filtering does for your gaming). Trouble is, will most gamers know or discover this? We doubt it.

After texturing, Parhelia's pixel pipelines have five pixel shader stages – NVIDIA and ATI currently can only muster two.

## THREE'S A CROWD



**You've seen it in the arcades, now you can enjoy it at home.**

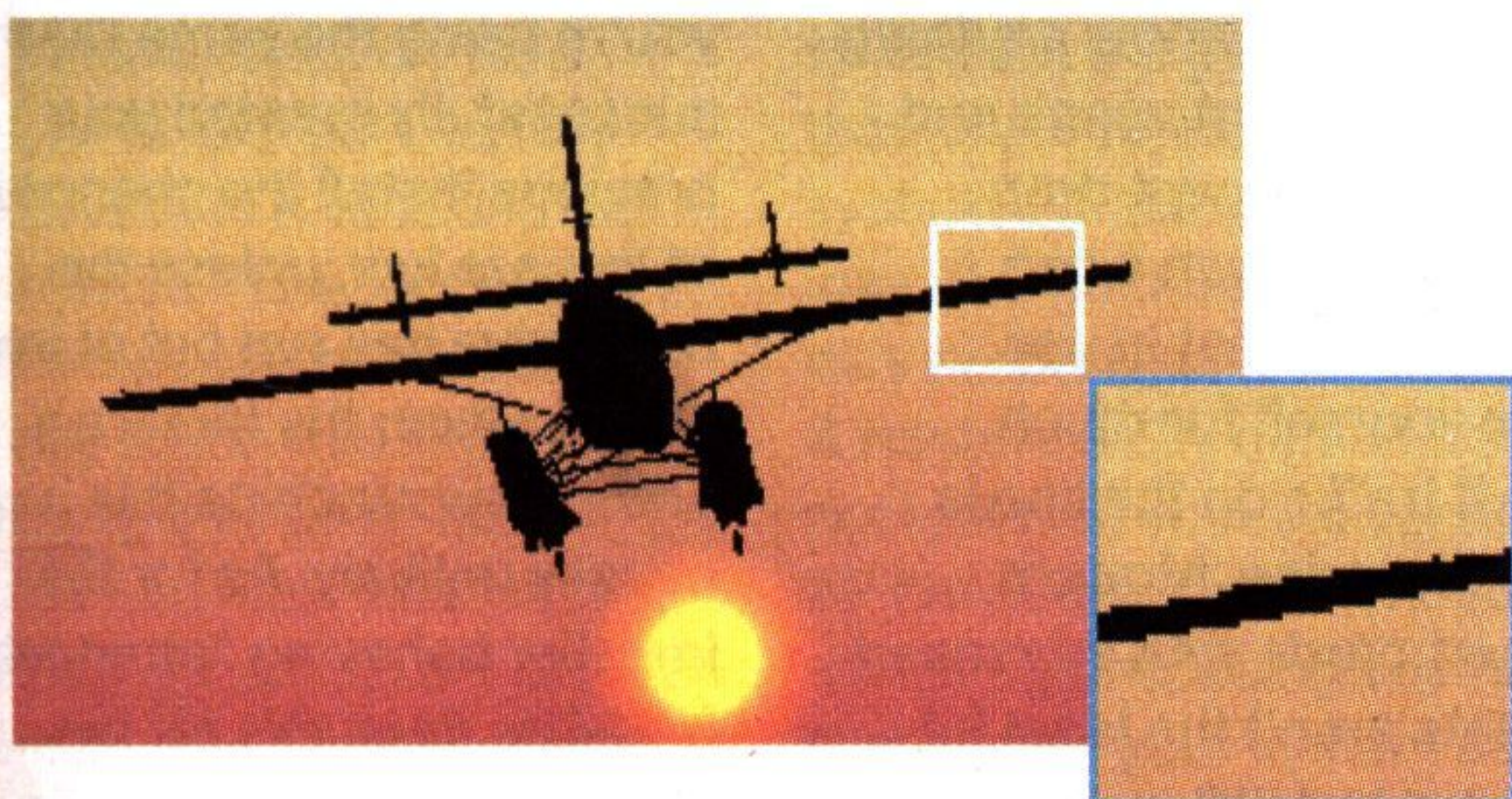
**It doesn't need much explanation this. Just look. Parhelia has the ability to output to three screens, and with suitably equipped games, it can show what's in your peripheral vision on the outer two monitors. This is so cool it hurts. Named Surround Gaming, it's a Matrox exclusive at present – and games using the *Quake III* engine support it, plus an ever-increasing roster of games if this year's E3 is to be believed. Visit the Matrox site for more information as it arrives.**

## EDGE ANTI-ALIASING

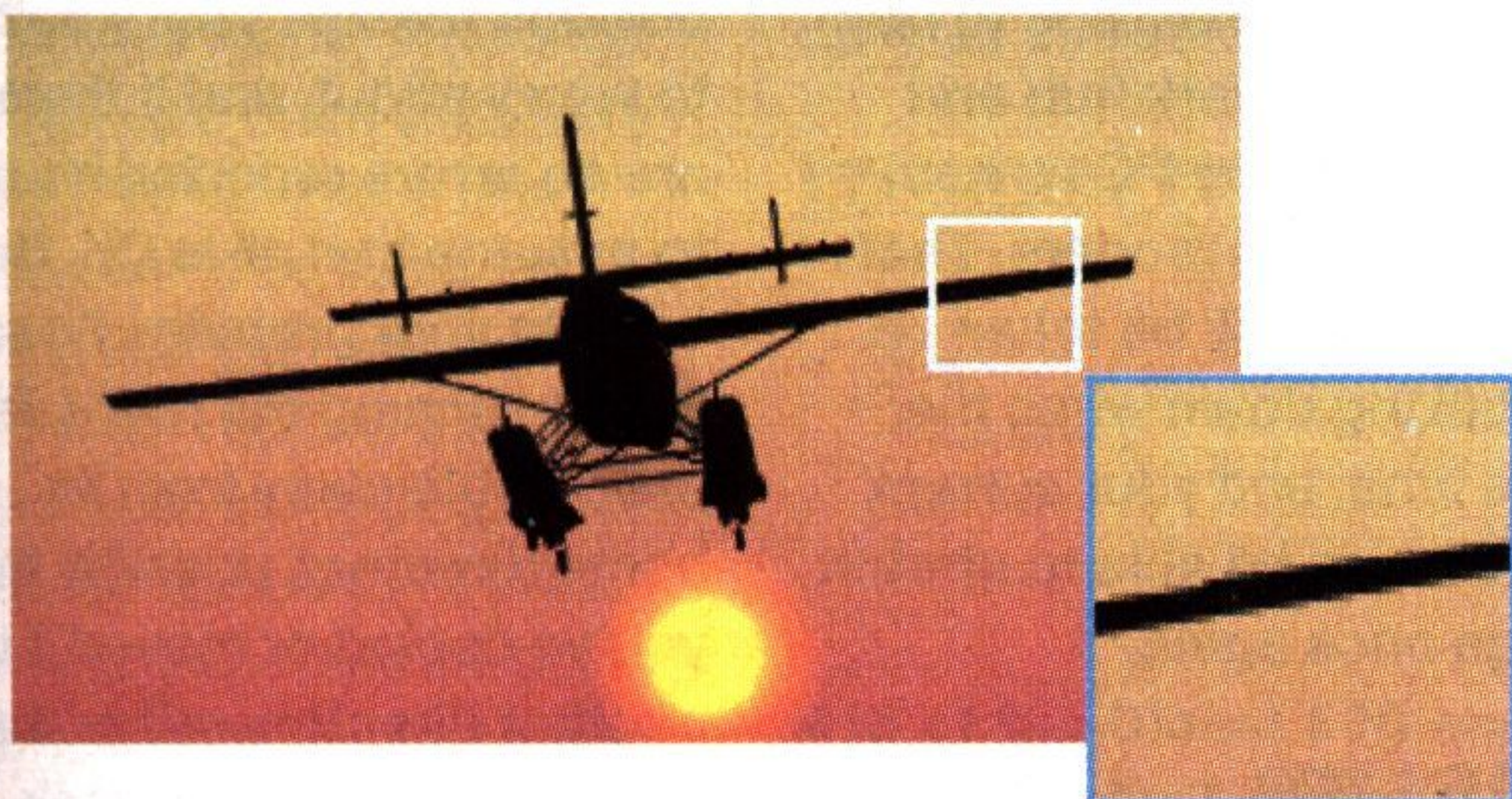
### SMOOTH OVER THOSE NASTY CREASES

If anti-aliasing an entire screen improves edges but makes the rest of the screen blurry, then why not anti-alias just the edges of objects? It should take less resources (only working with pixels along edges), and you can use more sophisticated techniques for anti-aliasing those pixels without crucifying the frame-rate.

Bingo! Both P10 and Parhelia are capable of edge anti-aliasing, the former by custom programming the card and the latter with its in-built algorithms. Rather than witter on about it, these pictures from Matrox should help explain what's happening...



**Without anti-aliasing, the edges of the wing are jagged**



**Hey Presto! Edge anti-aliasing smooths it out**

This allows more complex pixel shading effects (applying programmable light, shade and colour effects to individual pixels) to be applied within the game. Realistic-looking water is a great example of pixel shaders in action. To apply four pixel-shading effects, other cards would have to make another pass through the pixel pipelines, taking much longer.

So how does P10 fare in the pixel pipeline stakes? It's not as obvious from the technical details released thus far exactly how it works. 3DLabs are making a song and dance about its pixel shaders being more programmable than those of Parhelia or the other competition, though quite how long it will take this benefit to filter through in games is not clear. It has four pixel pipelines again, and the texture set-up portion looks to match that of Parhelia, though whether it can apply four textures per clock isn't clear.

### ALIAS SMITH AND JONES

Or rather, P10 and Parhelia. This final stage – anti-aliasing – is generally considered to be outside the traditional 3D pipeline; everything is pretty much sorted by now. You have an array of pixels of the correct

colour to send to the RAMDACs (random access memory digital-to-analogue converters) – the devices that convert the digital image into analogue signals to send to the monitor.

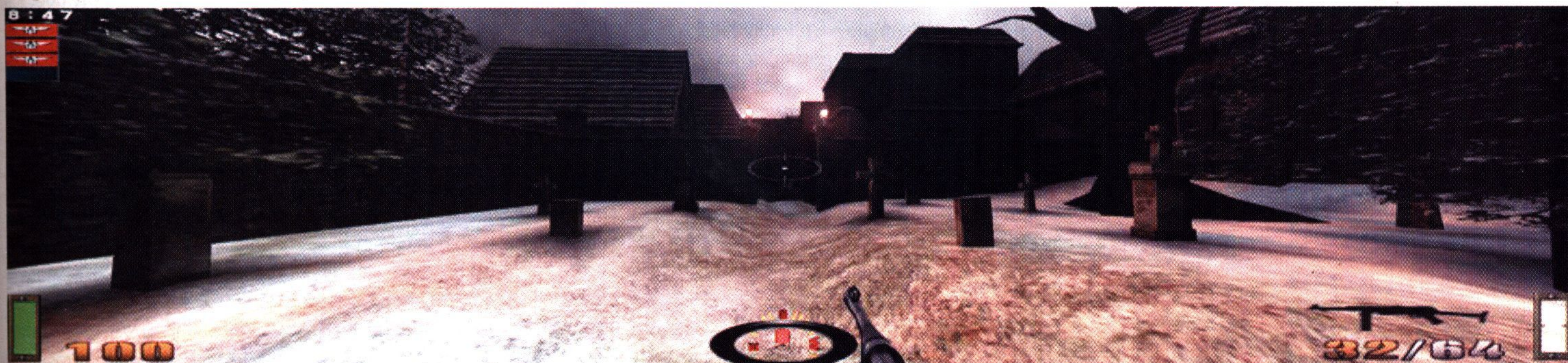
However, as a result of the image consisting of tiny square pixels, objects on screen can end up with jagged edges – and 'anti-aliasing' is a term that covers any process that softens these edges by manipulating their colours. All modern cards offer various anti-aliasing techniques, most of which apply a procedure which 'up-samples' the resolution of the screen to create more pixels, then calculates the colours the new pixels need to be to soften the edges, then down-samples the resolution back to normal, correcting the colours on the way. Unfortunately, this is hugely memory intensive, especially at higher resolutions, and most techniques end up softening the whole image – not just the edges, which is what you want. As a result, the anti-aliasing options that most cards can cope with end up looking blurry – a trade-off for jaggie reduction.

P10 is unique in that it has a fully programmable stage at this crucial point before the image goes to the RAMDACs – all other cards offer developers a

fixed range of anti-aliasing options. As a result, any anti-aliasing technique that can be thought of can be applied, including 'edge anti-aliasing' (see the boxout below for more details). Parhelia also offers edge anti-aliasing, unlike both NVIDIA and ATI. So a definite win for the newcomers here.

### AND THE WINNER IS...

Sorry techoids, but it's much too early to say. P10 offers a more radical approach than Matrox, with its extensive programmability and Virtual Memory system. It's also clearly going to be an Open GL winner, increasingly so as time passes. But Parhelia will be here in July – and selling to consumers. This will be before either ATI or NVIDIA make it to market with any card that can beat it. Parhelia will be expensive – \$450 is being touted as the US price, though Matrox assures us it won't end up a dollar-pound rip-off in the UK. But P10 is only going to arrive as a workstation card – at a workstation price – until Creative gets its consumer ass in gear. This might be too late if Matrox, NVIDIA and ATI have taken the lead already. But one thing remains – these are heady days for 3D gaming. And we thought GeForce 4 was exciting... **PCF**



**Surround gaming with all three monitors could leave your games looking like this. Cool eh?**





# DEAR WANDY

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## LET IT ALL OUT

Share your techie or gaming-related problems with us, and we, in turn, may well share it with thousands of readers via these very pages in a big communal love-in-type-thing.

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**Email** Address your letters to us at [letters@pczone.co.uk](mailto:letters@pczone.co.uk) with the subject heading 'Dear Wandy' Please note: while we can assure you that we read absolutely every techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Sorry.

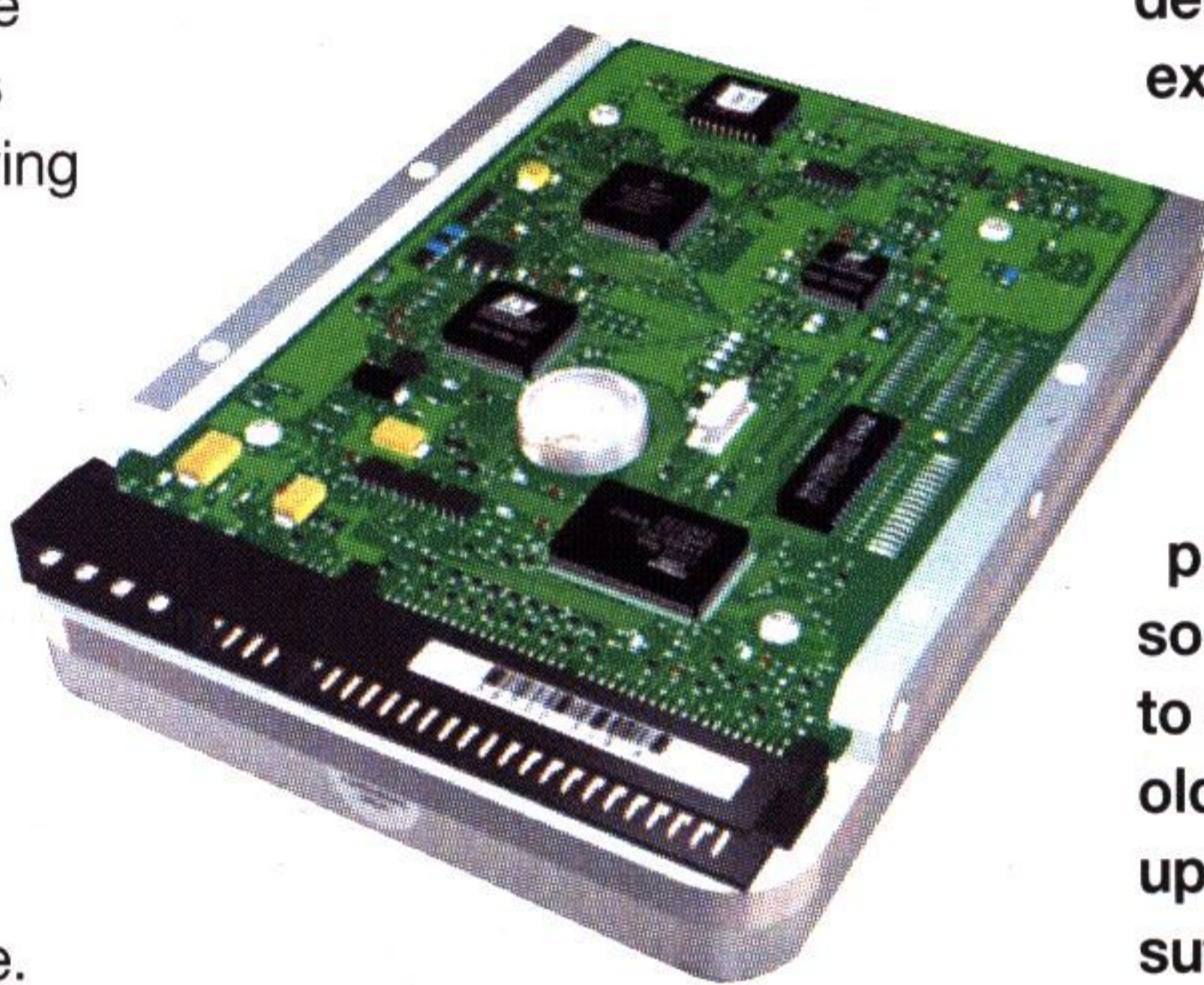
## FRAGGED DRIVE

**Q** I'm having trouble defragmenting my disk drive and was wondering if you could lend me your ears and vast knowledge. I try and run defrag, even Norton Anti-Virus and System Doctor, but the programs stop and restart due to disk writes. It tries and tries again several times before giving up – as you might imagine, it's getting on my nerves somewhat. I really need to defrag as the data on my disk is all over the place. Also, I have another problem. When I view cut-scenes in games, I get this terrible screeching noise. I've never had this problem before. The speakers are rather crappy units, but have lasted and work fine for music. As for the sound card it is a Sound Blaster Live! Pro. Any ideas?

Murdock

**A** This is a common problem caused by background tasks writing data to the disk. Because you can't defragment files when they're shuffling about, defrag must start over and wait for disk activity to finish. If more writes occur, defrag will restart again, and so on and so forth. Modern versions of Windows such as XP and 2000 include advanced tools that 'lock' the disks for exclusive access, thus preventing any other software jumping in. There are two ways around the problem with your current OS. The first is to reboot your PC in Safe Mode. To do this, press F8 when you see the Starting Windows prompt just after the diagnostic screens. Only essential background tasks are started in Safe Mode, and the chances of defrag going round in circles are thus rather low. The other way is to clobber CTRL + ALT + DEL and manually remove every task from the list that may be causing you grief. One by one,

stop every entry that isn't called SYSTRAY or EXPLORER by highlighting it and clicking End Task. If the problem remains, it's possible that you're out of memory and Windows is using areas of your hard drive for breathing

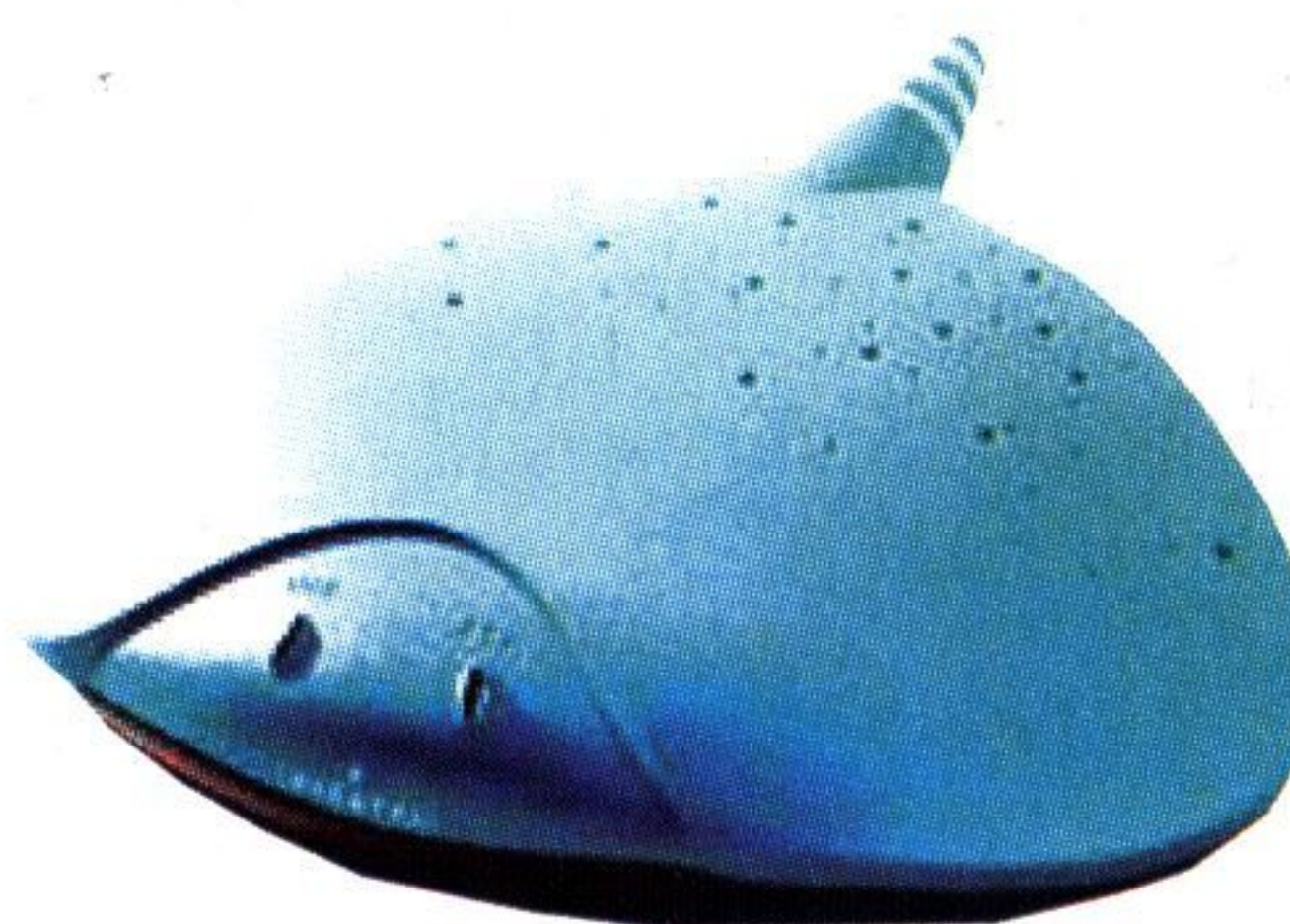


For good all-round performance, always keep your hard drives defragmented.

space. In which case, you'll need to buy more RAM. If you have 32Mb or 64Mb you should upgrade to 128Mb.

## RAVENOUS USB

**Q** Since fitting an Alcatel USB Broadband Modem, my PC has slowed down by an average of 30 per cent. When doing a time demo in *Quake III: Arena*, frame rates have dropped from 73fps to 48fps. Running SiSoft Sandra, memory test results are now depressing. All results reset to the way they were the moment I unplug the modem. BT hasn't been much help, nor has Alcatel, whose web-based support seems



The USB modem looks like a manta, feeds like one too.

to focus on software rather than hardware problems. I'm still waiting for them to email me back.

Terry Parker

**A** There's nothing wrong with either your modem or your PC. What you're describing is something I'd expect from a slightly older Pentium II or Pentium III-based system. USB modems constantly poll the machine to which they are connected, and sap processor power when doing so – an old Pentium coupled to an old motherboard with an old chipset will show anything up to 20 per cent usage and suffer a 30 per cent drop in frame rate even when the modem is not in use. Brace yourself for much more if traffic on the line is really motoring. Modern motherboards with advanced chipsets aren't the least bit flustered by USB modems, so upgrading could be something you might wish to consider. The other alternative is to buy yourself a network hub and use a lower spec PC as host for your Alcatel modem. That way, its CPU will be taken up with talking down wires the whole time, and your current machine will be able to stretch its legs once again.

## BARF LIFE

**Q** I've owned *Half-Life* for around two to three years, and I must say it's a brilliant game. A couple of months ago my family bought a new computer – an AMD Duron 800MHz with 128Mb RAM and SiS 630/730 internal AGP graphics. On my old 166MHz machine with Voodoo3 the game ran faultlessly – but with this new computer, things began very strangely. The game started to install and then, after only two or three percent of completion, it shot up to 15 percent and carried on at a normal pace.

Once properly installed, the game won't run. It comes up with error messages including Could not open bitmap file gfx/shell/btns\_main.bmp and after clicking OK it complains that Keyboard bindings file kb\_keys.lst is empty. Please Wandy, can you help me? This is the first time I've ever had the Internet, and would love to experience the joys of online *TFC*, *Counter-Strike* and plain old brilliant *Half-Life*.

Tom Seaman

**A** There's a chance that *Half-Life* hasn't arrived intact on your hard drive. If you're using the same CD that successfully created your previous install the chances of this are low, unless the hard drive has run out of free space. Given the fact it's a brand new machine this is equally unlikely. As for the installer behaving "strangely", *Half-Life* does this for me also – right at the start, the progress bar will make a Jonathan Edwards leap for no obvious reason. That's nothing to worry about, and if there are no errors reported it's safe to assume that all is OK. But back to your problem. I'd say you're running the *Half-Life* executable away from its home directory, possibly that you've copied or moved it to another directory rather than created a shortcut. Check your main *Half-Life* folder – by default C:\Sierra\Half-Life – and make sure that the core hl.exe file is present. My guess is that it's not. Go find it, and drag it back.

## INFECTED WITH A VIRUS

**Q** I have a problem. Recently, after a spell downloading music from Kazaa, my PC picked up a virus. The first I knew of it was when all the pictures I'd taken with a borrowed digital camera had changed from a picture icon to

**"Since fitting an Alcatel USB Broadband Modem, my PC has slowed down by an average of 30 per cent"**



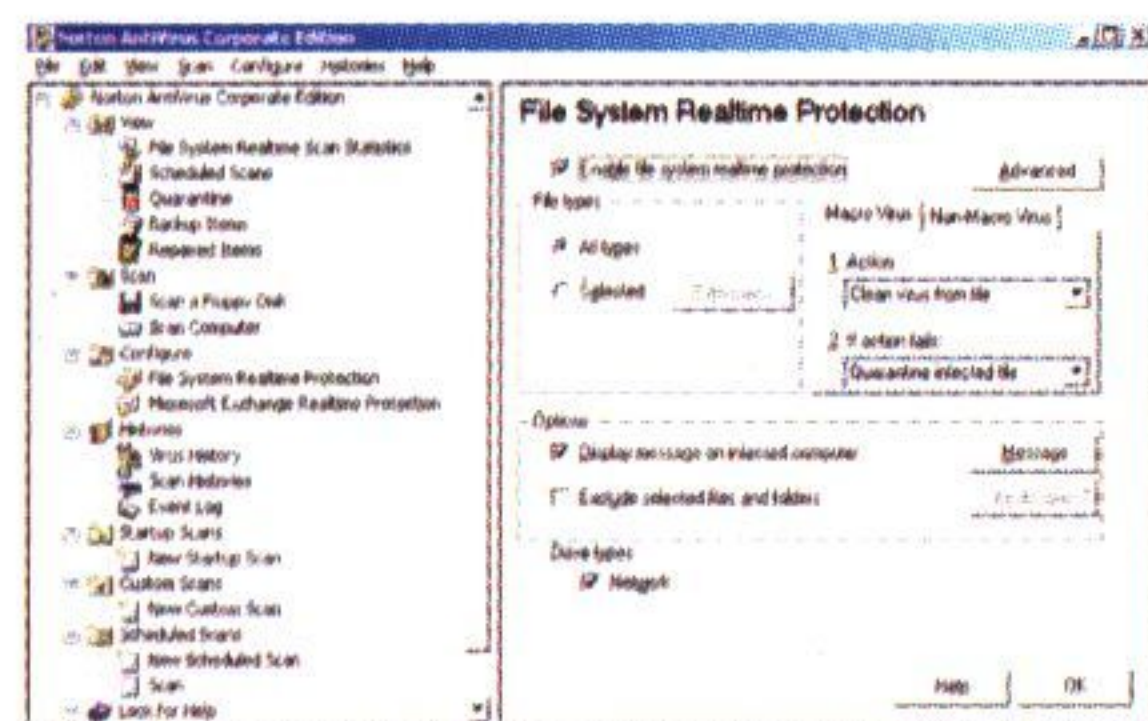
**"I just can't stress enough how much everyone needs class-leading virus protection these days"**

a scroll. When I clicked on the scroll, I was put through to the Microsoft Outlook installation screen. I cancelled from this and started scratching my head. My first stop was to restore my operating system – Windows XP – to an older date (a Microsoft wizard allows you to do this). This worked, but then all the game demos I had uninstalled were back again, and now I can't uninstall or install them again. How do I do this? Knowing that this probably had not eradicated the virus, I searched [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and chanced upon Housecall virus tracker. Using this to check my hard drive, I was told that I had the VBS Loveletter A virus and that it had infected more than 400 files in my temporary Internet folder. The only option was to delete the files as they could not be cleaned – so I did. Most of them have now gone, but I am left with 61, which cannot be deleted. I'm told that the files are "currently in use". I've cleaned my disk again using the Windows XP wizard, and checked for the virus once more. Yet again I am told I have 61 files infected. These files do not seem to be infecting anything else but I am worried – what if when I borrow the camera again all my pictures are erased this same way? How do I know what these files are doing? I have now downloaded VCArch to look over any incomings and have stopped using Kazaa, but obviously I don't want my whole system going pear-shaped. Please can you help.

Anxious Joe

**A** I just can't stress enough how much everyone needs class-leading virus protection these days. I'd never even heard of VCArch, let alone used it, so the first thing I'd recommend you do is replace it with a bought copy of Symantec's Norton Anti-Virus 2002 from [www.symantec.com](http://www.symantec.com). Like VCArch its job is to prevent you

from downloading new viruses, but it will also deal effectively with ones already present on your system, and will update itself automatically online. It's also well known, well supported, and hugely dependable. To put it another way: I've been online for more than 12 years now and have yet to succumb to viruses. Sure, I get an alert three or four times a week from NAV telling me that something on my PC has been put into quarantine and that I'm not allowed to touch it, but I've never suffered as a result. As for being unable to remove the game demos that have reappeared on your system, I'm sorry but I'm at a loss. I've not had a chance to play properly with XP Backup & Restore as by default it was not installed with the version of XP I'm using. To be honest, I'd advise against using anything that affects your system so broadly. Backup your data, sure, but Windows with it? Personally speaking, I'd never do it, as there's too high a risk



**415 of the Global 500 and 485 of the Fortune 500 companies rely on Symantec solutions every day. You should too.**

of restoring damaged or infected system files (as I believe you have inadvertently done). If something goes badly wrong with the underlying OS, reinstall it from the original box and start afresh. With regard to your continuing virus problems, derivations of LoveLetter will overwrite all manner of different file formats, including .jpg and .jpeg, explaining why your camera pictures turned iffy.

Additionally, .MP3 files are hidden, which may account for why you have 61 infected files that are mysteriously unwilling to die.

### NOTHING TO SEE HERE

**Q** This isn't really a problem – far from it in fact – but my case is blessed. Over the last couple of years I've read with amazement the number of letters describing high-end systems, with processors up to and beyond the power of mine, crippled by single figure frame rates in all the top titles. My old machine had 128Mb RAM, a 433MHz processor and a GeForce2. I could run games that claimed they required 600MHz on 1024x768, 32-bit high-detail settings without any problems. My new machine is an Athlon XP 1600+ with 386Mb RAM. Again, I experience none of the slowdowns of your correspondents with far superior computers. Is my case mysteriously allowing any components within it to function at abnormal speeds, or is there a more mundane explanation? If not, would PC ZONE like to auction off this mystical case? How does five per cent commission grab you eh? Eh?

Robin

**A** Around about ten years ago I rescued an in-car CD player from a junkyard, this was back in the days when compact discs themselves were still something of a novelty, let alone a machine capable of playing them in your car. To complement it I busted open a pair of Technics cabinet speakers and arranged the woofer, mid-range and tweeter components on the back shelf. When plugged together and powered up, the car was filled with seraphic harmonies and the deepest, crispest bass notes ever to stroke my intestines. As if by magic, and

with little or no understanding of what I was doing, I'd created the world's finest ICE setup. The same is true for computers. The first Pentium machine I built is still being used by my father, and even now feels reasonably fast. To this day I consider the old girl – a P133 with 64Mb RAM – something of an enigma. My latest high-end system is a 1.5GHz Pentium 4 with a GeForce3, yet I know of lesser 1GHz systems that outperform it visually in *Dungeon Siege* or *Half-Life*. Certain processors work well with certain motherboards, and if you get the recipe just right you'll have a dead-cert winner on your hands.



**In days gone by, the difference between fast and really fast PCs was all the more marked.**

Much of the skill in creating such beasts used to be all trial and error, but these days you have our Buyer's Guide to help you out. Stick to the stuff you see there and you can't go far wrong, blessed case or not. **W7**

**Move Here**

**Copy Here**

**Create Shortcut(s) Here**

**Cancel**

**WIN £50**

**Right-click dragging is the way forward.**

### DRAG AND DROP OR NOT

Drag and drop is key to every graphical user interface, and knowing how to do it is key to working in Windows. Most people drag and drop using the left mouse button. This is all very well, but too often you make mistakes: copying when you wanted to move, or moving when you wanted to create a shortcut. The best way to prevent this is to use the right-click method. Click, hold and drag an icon just as you would normally, only this time with the right mouse button. When you let go, a small menu appears giving you the option to copy, move, create shortcut or cancel. That way, you'll never make mistakes. But you needn't use the mouse the whole time. Keyboard veterans among you can use the Windows clipboard keys, CTRL+X, CTRL+C and CTRL+V for cut, copy and paste respectively. To move a file without dragging, highlight it and press CTRL+X for cut. Browse to the new folder in Explorer and press CTRL+V to paste. You can even do this with pictures from the web. Right-click on a picture and select Copy, then click on your desktop or other folder and press CTRL+V. The image you chose will magically appear as a new bitmap document – much easier than going via a paint package.

Each issue I'll divulge one of my top tips, unless you can do better. Send 'em to the address on the previous page, and if I think the tip is top enough I'll print it and send you £50.





# WATCHDOG

**Anger. Frustration. Despair. Yep, just another month in the life of a consumer. Get some therapy by dropping us a line...**

■ **WRITING THE WRONGS** Adam Phillips

## ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Don't worry – we're here to help when you've reached the end of your tether. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line.

**WRITE TO** Watchdog, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD

**EMAIL** Alternatively, email us at [letters@pczone.co.uk](mailto:letters@pczone.co.uk) with the subject heading 'Watchdog'

## READ ME!

If you are writing into complain about a product, please supply us with your full name, address and contact number. With PCs, make sure that you also include all purchasing details such as reference and invoice numbers.

## MONITOR MISERY

Upgrading your PC can be a nightmare business, although buying a monitor is one of the least fraught tasks. Or so thought Simon Mumford when he decided to splash his cash on a new iiyama TFT monitor.

Scouting around for the best price on the Internet, he tried Dabs first but was told that it would take them three to four weeks to get him the model he wanted. He then moved on to Scan, who didn't seem to have a problem supplying him.

Having submitted his order, the money left his account four days later. A further three days passed before he called to see what was going on. Scan promised him the monitor would arrive that week but nothing turned up.

So began a game of cat and mouse, with Scan promising and failing to meet several delivery dates. Three weeks later he asked for a refund, which Scan agreed to. Unfortunately another week has passed and Simon still hasn't received his money.

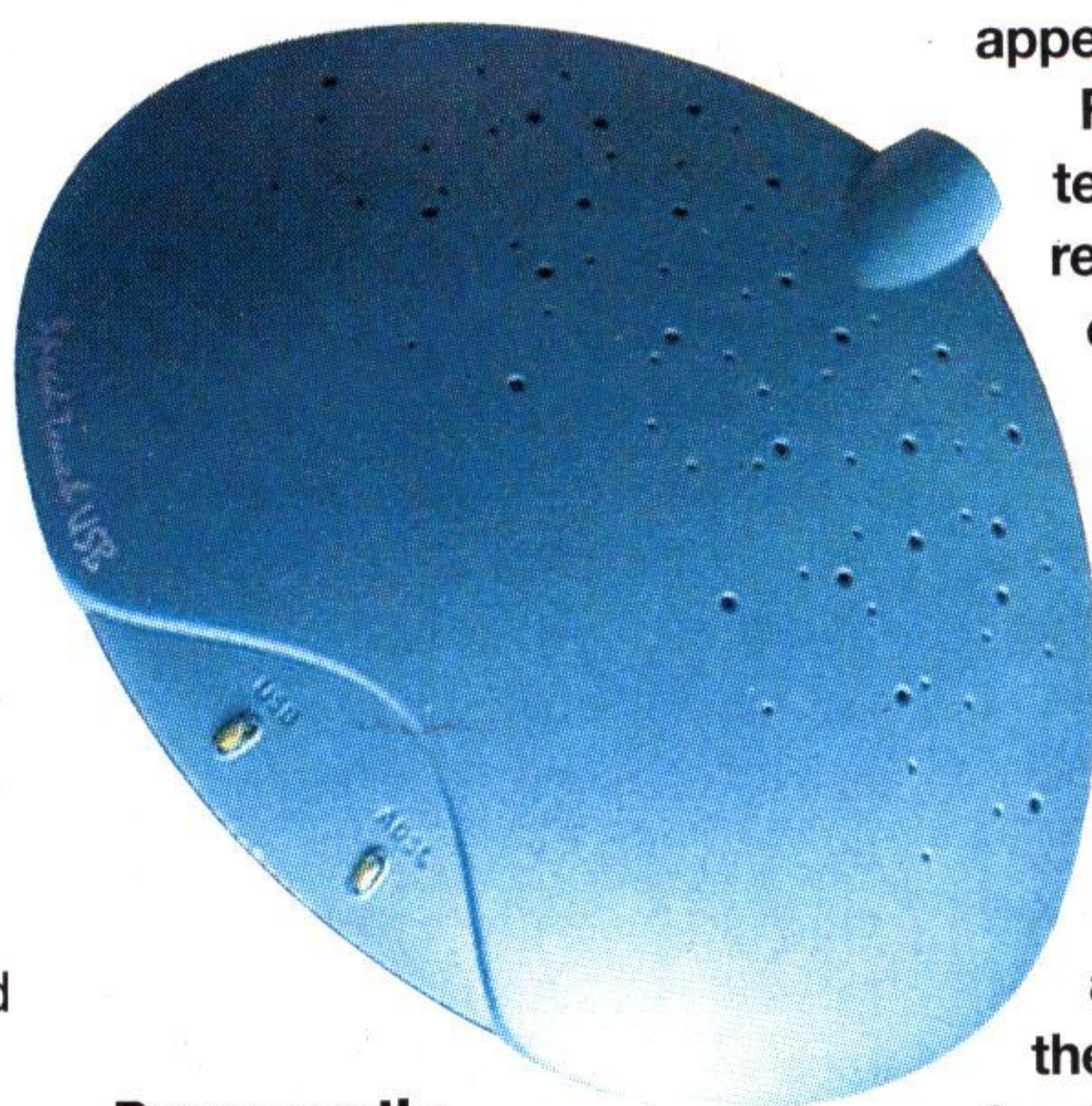
**We contacted Scan to see if we could hurry them up, and they responded by saying that they had actually made Simon aware of the delays with his monitor on various dates. "Scan has had backorders on all iiyama TFT monitors since early February 2002. iiyama have had difficulty in manufacturing, causing huge delays in shipments."**

Scan also says that Simon was able to keep track of his order through their online parcel tracking system, a feature that a lot of other online retailers don't offer. The good news is that it looks like things have been sorted and that Simon has finally received his refund.

## PIPEX PROBS

ADSL is becoming the backbone of top quality deathmatch bouts and hardcore fans are signing up in droves to bring their ping times crashing down.

Unfortunately, the promised land is turning into a minefield for some of our readers: "Having just got my new ADSL from Pipex", explains Christopher Ly, "I decided to log onto TFC and make use of my new LPB status



**Permanently on and fast, but there have been teething problems.**

with my clan on the Jolt servers that we frequent. But when I opened up the All Seeing Eye and added a Jolt UKo server it didn't ping."

His mates were pinging without any trouble so Chris decided to investigate further. He found this on the Jolt UKo order page: "Please note UKo servers will not be accessible to customers of Pipex or to customers who use an ISP that relies on Pipex's connectivity. This issue is beyond our control, please contact Pipex direct (or your ISP) with any queries."

Now Chris was annoyed. "This means I'm paying for a service I can't play with my clan on. I have emailed Pipex for two weeks with no reply and if I don't hear something soon I'm going to walk and refuse to pay my termination fee."

**Ouch. The news isn't good. Here's what Pipex says: "It isn't a case of Pipex preventing customers from accessing the servers. The issue stems from how our customers are routed and how Jolt's UK-only servers decide who is within the UK."**

They explain that because Pipex uses a network that

doesn't have a peering agreement in the UK with Nildram (Jolt's parent company), Pipex customers are routed through to the US in order to access Jolt's servers. "Unfortunately, as far as Jolt are concerned, our customers appear to be based in the US.

For these and other technical reasons, Pipex reckon that ultimately no-one is to blame for your particular problem but they do say that they are working on a solution. In the meantime, we reckon that they should do the decent thing, cut you some slack and let you walk away from your agreement without paying the standard £50 termination fee. Let us know what happens.

## AN UNDAB HAND

So you decide to treat yourself and splash out on a fancy new Sony Clie – the last thing you want to find out is that the entire left-hand side of the screen has a nasty green tinge the first time you boot it up. Then to make matters worse, the company you bought it from, in this case Dabs, then seemingly tries to fob you off.

"I contacted Dabs promptly via its website," explains the unfortunate Adam Corrie. "Telephoning customer services is futile since queues are always in excess of 30 people. I received a reply back asking me to contact the manufacturer."

Adam reckons he is somewhat used to retailers trying to neglect their obligations under a contract of sale, so he replied to the email asking why he needed to contact Sony: "The reply came a few days later. Dabs claimed that around 40 per cent of the manufacturers they deal with prefer to deal directly with the customer when an item is faulty."

Eventually Adam did cave in and contacted Sony on the number they gave him: "The representative I spoke to informed me that he could not

help me as they dealt only with trade, not end-users," says Adam. "A little irked by this, I contacted Dabs again. No reply so I contacted them again. Still no reply."

He reckons Dabs seems to be going downhill. "It's a shame because they used to be the best retailer in the UK."

We contacted Dabs on behalf of Adam to see if it could offer any helpful advice: "When a customer discovers a product purchased from Dabs is faulty, our primary goal is, of course, to resolve the matter as quickly as possible which is why, in the case of Mr Corrie, we asked the customer to contact the manufacturer directly to obtain a fault reference number," explained a spokesperson for the company. "This is by far the speediest route to confirming a fault, as the need to go through manual testing is avoided."

Dabs says its records actually show that Adam did obtain a fault reference number from Sony and he



**The Sony Clie – a lovely piece of kit. When working correctly...**

notified Dabs by email on April 17. "On receipt of this email, we arranged a returns authorisation number the same day, and confirmed this via email, which also prompted Mr Corrie to indicate a convenient time for us to pick up the Clie via our

## THE ACCUSED

SCAN  
dabs  
com

ECLIPSE  
COMPUTERS

tiny

PIPEX

**GUILTY UNTIL  
PROVEN INNOCENT**



## SAINTS NOT SINNERS

### A VERY INFREQUENT SLOT FOR THOSE COMPANIES ACTUALLY RECEIVING A THUMBS UP FROM CUSTOMERS...

"Top banana!" says reader Jon Cox about Electronics Boutique. He's rather happy about Electronics Boutique and their no-quibble 10-day money back guarantee on all games. "This means I can try a game out and take it back for a full refund if I don't like it rather than being stuck with a lemon..."

Fair enough - all retailers selling games should take a leaf out of EB's book...



Lemons not welcome at Electronics Boutique.

Online Collections tool," said Dabs. "Mr Corrie logged in to do this on April 27 and the faulty unit was received by our returns department on May 3. A replacement unit was despatched the same day and subsequently delivered on May 9 [the day after we contacted Dabs asking what was going on - Watchdog]."

Dabs does say that it's sorry that your Clie was faulty, and that you were dissatisfied with their handling of arrangements for a replacement. "We always listen to customer feedback and use these reports to help continually evolve our procedures for the return of goods to Dabs," offers the spokesperson.

### HELLO? ECLIPSE?

Right. You buy a brand spanking new CPU. It is faulty. You phone the customer service line. It's bugger all use. So you fax your details through instead. Five times. Plus you send three emails. And fill in a fault report on the company website. You wait. And wait. And get sod all response. Welcome to Eclipse Computers, as experienced by reader Paul Herd.

Watchdog contacts Eclipse. They tell us to email its Sales department. We do. We wait. And wait. We send a 'reminder'. And we wait. And wait. Then we publish the complaint without their response so that readers can judge Eclipse by their (in)actions. 'Nuff said. [P]

## A TINY UPDATE

### THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE TINY/TIME DEBACLE

It's not surprising that we've received many complaints about Tiny and the fact that since they went bust, customers who used a credit card have ended up with a seemingly useless warranty. We contacted Time, who bought Tiny, to see if there is light at the end of the tunnel for furious consumers who've been left high and dry. The following is an edited press release from Time as of May 14:

"Trading Standards and Time Group are pleased to announce that the credit card industry has joined discussions that could help resolve issues for Tiny customers unable to get support for their PCs. This follows a warning that 80,000 customers who had taken out agreements with the previous management of Tiny could face uncertainty because of the failure of the credit card industry to co-operate in a way that will help owners of warranties. Time is currently supporting more than 280,000 cash and finance customers left in the lurch by the previous management of Tiny.

"The Time Group is very pleased to have met with representatives of the

credit card industry. The meeting was held on April 3 with The Royal Bank of Scotland Streamline, Trading Standards and Time Group. The outcome of the meeting gives hope for customers who paid for goods by credit card. As a gesture of goodwill Time Group will continue to provide telephone support, while the credit card industry discusses its responsibilities to customers."

Time Group expects the credit card industry to help those customers who are being left without support due to the collapse of the old company. It is

however being made clear that the Time Group will be withdrawing support if there is no conclusion reached by the agreed date of April 12. Customers with questions should contact 0870 830 3288."

While the dates mentioned in the press release have come and gone, Time assures us that at the time of going to press they are still in negotiations with the credit card companies. One way or another it looks like the story is nearing the end. We will, of course, keep you informed of any future developments.



How customers feel about splashing out on a Tiny PC?



The CHEATMISTRESS presents

# CHEATS UNLIMITED

TIPS! CHEATS & WALKTHROUGHS

TOP WALKTHROUGHS PLUS OVER 10,000 CHEATS & TIPS

**A = 01**  
Age of Emp. 2: Conqueror  
Age of Emp. Rise of Rome  
**Age of Empires 1 & 2**  
Airport Inc  
Alien vs Predator (Gold)  
Aliens vs Predator 2  
Allied Assault: M. of Hon.  
Anachronox  
Arcanum  
Army Men 2 & Air tactics  
Atlantis

**B = 02**  
Baldur's G. 2: Sh. of Amn  
Baldur's Gate  
Battle Realms  
Beavis & Butthead  
Black & White  
Black & White: Creat. Isle  
Blade Runner  
Blood Omen 2  
Broken Sword 1 & 2

**C = 03**  
C&C: Aftermath  
C&C: Red Alert 1 & 2  
C&C: Red Alert 2 Y's Rev.  
C&C: Renegade  
C&C: Tiberian Sun  
Caesar 3  
Carmageddon TDR 2000

**Champ. Manager '00 & '01**  
Champ. Manager 97, 98 & 99  
Champ. Manager 2 & 3  
Civilization 3  
Codename: Outbreak  
Colin McRae Rally 1 & 2  
Comanche 4  
Command & Conquer  
Commandos 2  
**Commandos Behind Lines**  
Constructor  
Cossacks: The Art of war  
Cossacks: European Wars  
Curse of Monkey Island  
Cutthroats

**D = 04**  
Dark Forces 2: Jedi Knight  
Delta Force 2 & Land Warrior  
Desperados  
Deus-Ex  
Diablo  
Diablo 2  
Discworld Noir  
Doom  
Dracula Last Sanctuary  
Driver  
Duke Nukem 3D  
Dune 2000  
Dungeon Keeper 1 & 2  
Dungeon Siege

**E = 05**  
Earthworm Jim 2  
Economic War  
Emperor - Battle for Dune  
Empire Earth  
Escape Monkey Island  
**F = 06**  
FA PLgue F'ball Man. '02  
Fallout 2  
FIFA 2000, 2001, 2002 & 97  
Final Doom  
Final Fantasy 8  
Flashpoint  
Flight Unlimited 2

**G = 07**  
Galactic Battlegrounds  
Gangsters 1 & 2  
Ghost Recon  
Grand Theft Auto 1, 2 & 3

Grim Fandango  
GTA: London 1969  
**H = 08**

**Half Life**  
Half Life: Blue Shift  
Half Life: Opposing Force  
Harry Potter  
Heist  
Heroes of M. & Magic 4  
Hidden & Dangerous  
Hired Team  
**Hitman**

Hooligans: Storm Europe  
Hostile Waters

**I = 09**  
I. Jones: Infernal Machine  
Imperium Galactica 1 & 2  
Incoming  
Independence War 2

**Jedi Knight 2**  
Kingdom Under Fire  
Kingpin

**L = 12**  
Lego Racers  
Links 2001  
London Racer

**M = 13**  
Master of Olympus  
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX

**Max Payne**  
Mech Commander 1 & 2  
Mech Warrior 4

**Medal of Honor: All. Assault**  
Men in Black  
Metal Fatigue  
Metal Gear Solid  
Midtown Madness 1 & 2  
Monsters Inc  
Moto Racer 3  
Myst 1 & 3

**N = 14**  
Need 4 Speed 5 Porsche  
**O = 15**

Oni  
Operation Flashpoint  
**P = 16**  
Pof Radiance: M. Drannor  
Pharaoh  
Planescape Torment  
Populous the Beginning  
Project IGI

**Q = 17**  
Quake

**R = 18**  
Railroad Tycoon 2  
RC Tycoon: C'screw Follies  
Red Alert 1 & 2  
Red Alert 2 Yuri Revenge  
Red Faction  
Renegade  
Resident Evil  
Return to C. Wolfenstein  
Robot Wars  
Rogue Spear  
Rogue Squadron  
**Roller Coaster Tycoon**  
Rugby 2001  
Runescape

**S = 19**  
S. Wars: Force Comm.  
Serious Sam 1 & 2  
Settlers 4  
Severance: Blade of Dark.  
Shogun: Total War  
**Sim City 2000 & 3000**  
Sim Golf  
**Sims**

Sims Hot Date  
**Sims House Party**  
Sims Livin' It Up  
Sims on Holiday  
Soldier of Fortune  
Spiderman  
Sports Car GT  
Star Trek: Armada 1 & 2  
Star Trek: Elite Forces  
Star Wars: Gal. B'grounds  
**Star Wars: Jedi Knight 1 & 2**  
Star Wars: Phantom M.  
Star Wars: Racer  
Star Wars: Rogue Squad.  
Star Wars: S. of Empire  
Sting!  
Stronghold  
Sudden Strike 1 & Forever

**T = 20**  
The Italian Job  
**Theme Hospital**  
Theme Park  
Theme Park Inc  
Theme Park World  
Thief: Dark Project  
Tiberian Sun  
TOCA Touring Cars 2  
**Tomb Raider 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5**  
Total Annihilation  
Transport Tycoon

**U = 21**  
Ultimate Soccer Man. 1 & 98

**V = 22**  
VR Powerboat Racing

**W = 23**  
Warhammer: Dark Omen  
Warlords 3  
Warrior Kings  
Warzone 2100  
Wolfenstein 3D  
Worms 2

**Z = 26**  
Z  
Zeus: Master of Olympus  
Zoo Tycoon



THE ABOVE LIST IS JUST A SELECTION OF WHAT'S AVAILABLE

PERSONS AGED 16 OR OVER MAY CALL THIS NUMBER

09066 094 898

PERSONS AGED UNDER 16 MAY CALL THIS NUMBER

09066 094 368

CALLS TO THE ABOVE NUMBERS COST ONLY 60p PER MINUTE

NON-UK CALLERS: +44 700 590 7575



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Please ensure you have permission from the bill payer before calling. Each call to the under 16's number will cost no more than £3.00, and will end at 5 minutes. Mobile phone call charges may vary. Please put any comments or questions in writing to Interactive Telcom Ltd, 8 Grants Walk, PL25 5AA, or email: custserv@cheatsunlimited.com, or call our

24hr Customer Service: (Freephone) 0800 081 6000



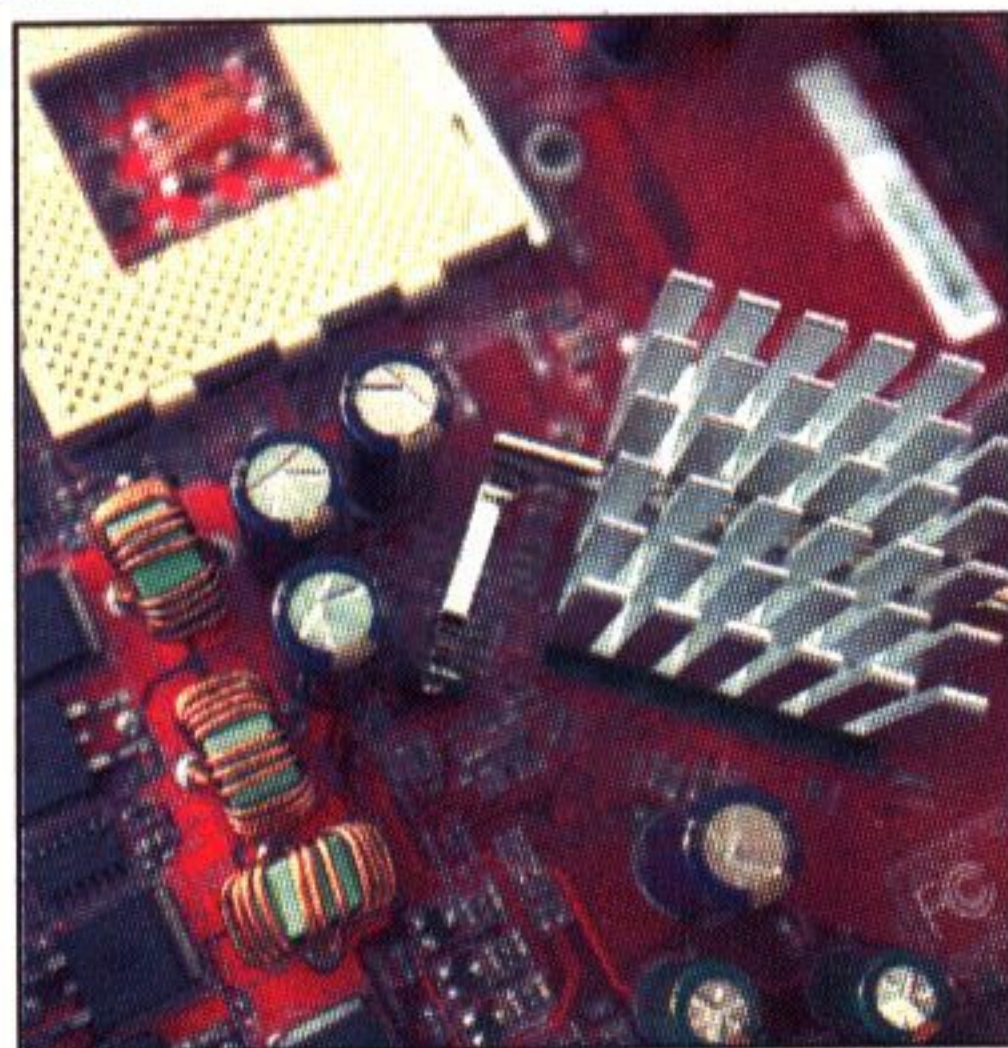
# BUYER'S GUIDE

Are you looking to upgrade your PC? Since we've started this Buyer's Guide, prices have dropped consistently every month – and we'll keep on checking to ensure that this guide gives you the most accurate and up-to-date information. While we're on the subject, memory is dirt cheap as well – if you're still labouring with less than 128Mb RAM, buy some now

## ◀ BEST BUY

## BEST BUDGET ▶

### MOTHERBOARD



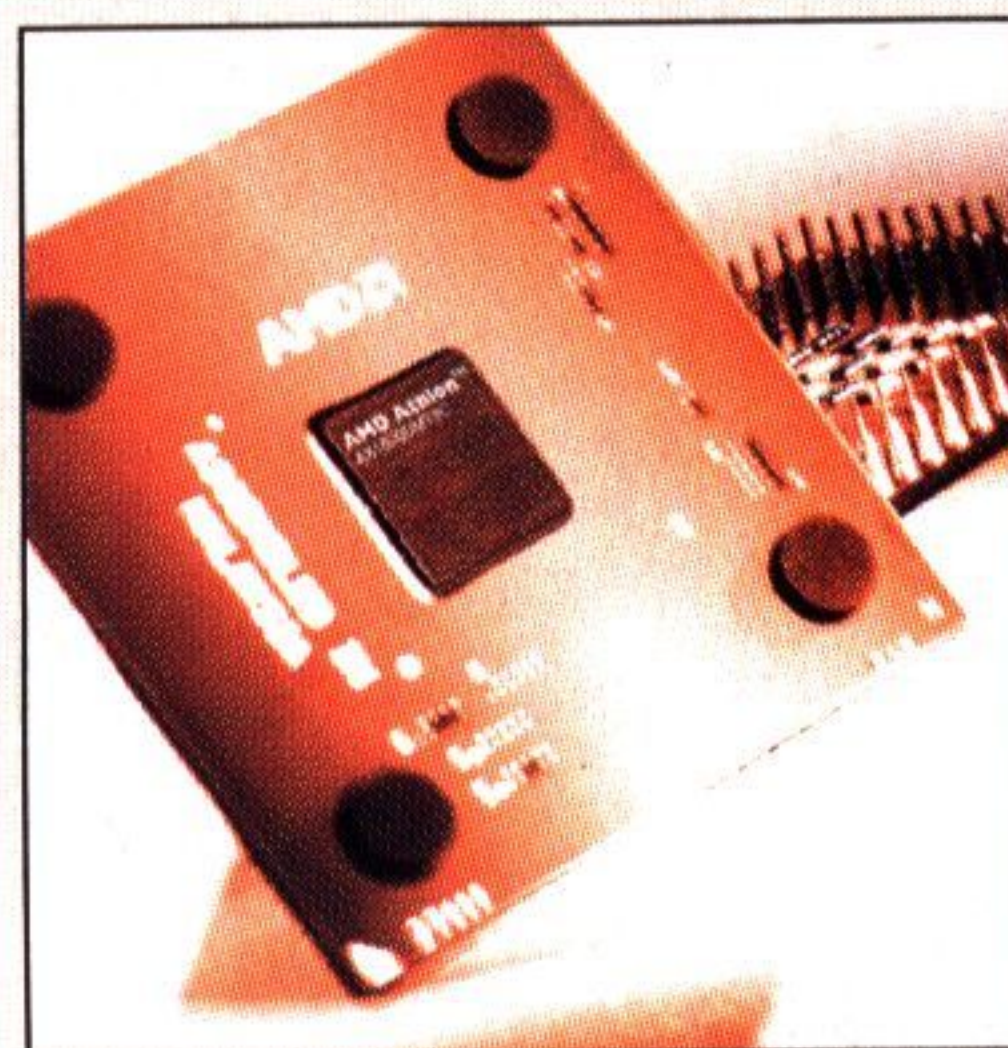
#### MSI K7N420 PRO

**STREET PRICE** £102 inc VAT  
**TELEPHONE** N/A

**MANUFACTURER** MicroStar International  
**WEBSITE** [www.msi.com.tw](http://www.msi.com.tw)

The Asus A7V266-E just gets edged off its well-deserved plinth by a motherboard featuring the NVIDIA nForce 420D chipset. In testing, the board showed superb performance in the crucial OpenGL and DirectX 8.1 tests. It has a number of optional extras, so check with the retailer about what to expect in the box you buy – integrated LAN, additional USB slots, TV out and digital audio out are all available. Bear in mind that if you have an old video card, you may not need a new one with this board – it has a GeForce 2 MX class GPU integrated into the Northbridge... for free! Bit of a bonus...

### PROCESSOR



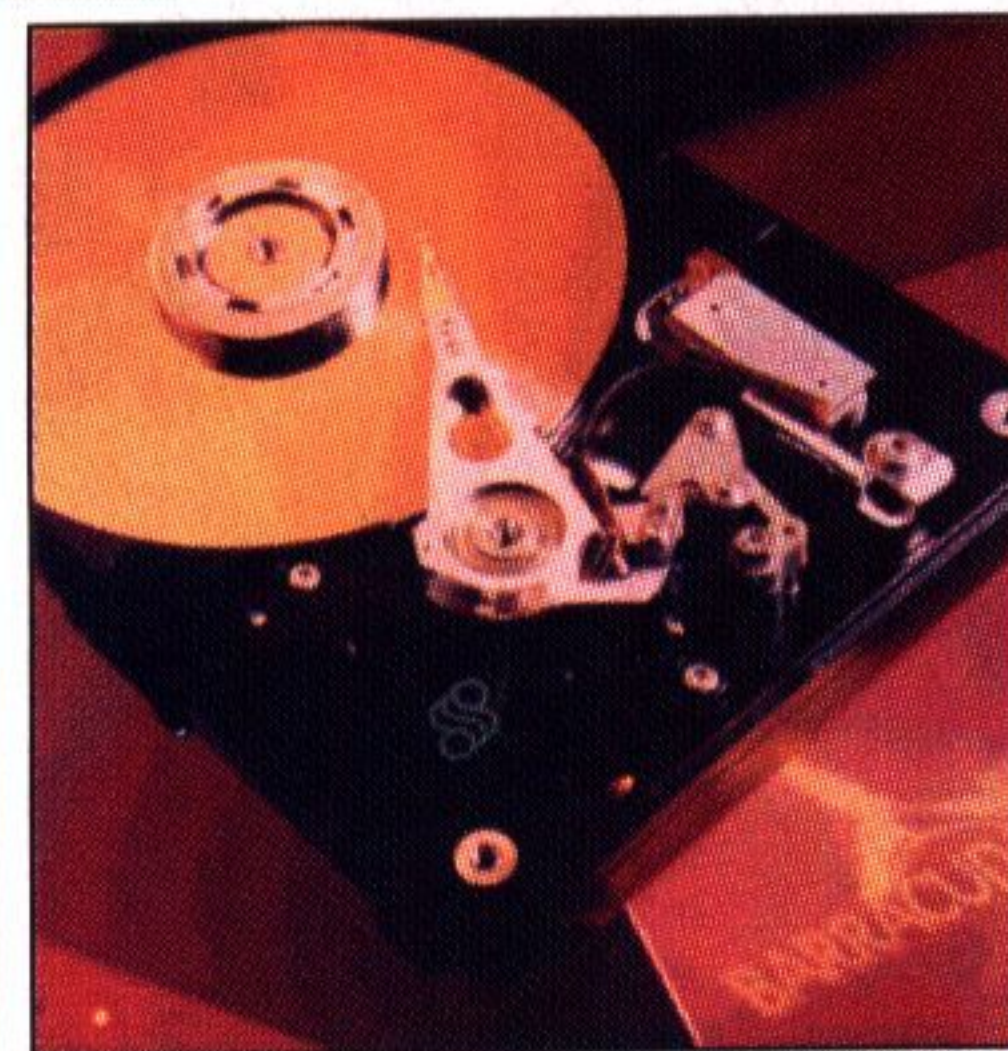
#### AMD ATHLON XP 1900+

**STREET PRICE** £122 inc VAT  
**TELEPHONE** N/A

**MANUFACTURER** AMD  
**WEBSITE** [www.amd.com](http://www.amd.com)

The Athlon XP processors are named after the clockspeed of Intel processors it claims to beat. The 1900+ actually runs at a clockspeed of 1.6GHz, and with new so-called QuantiSpeed architecture, more on-chip cache and souped-up 3DNow! instruction set, it offers superb performance in a range of applications – not least games. While the 2100 is currently the fastest processor in the range, the 1900+ is good value for money. Ensure your Socket A motherboard has an updated BIOS and correctly rated components to run an XP processor before you fork out.

### HARD DRIVE



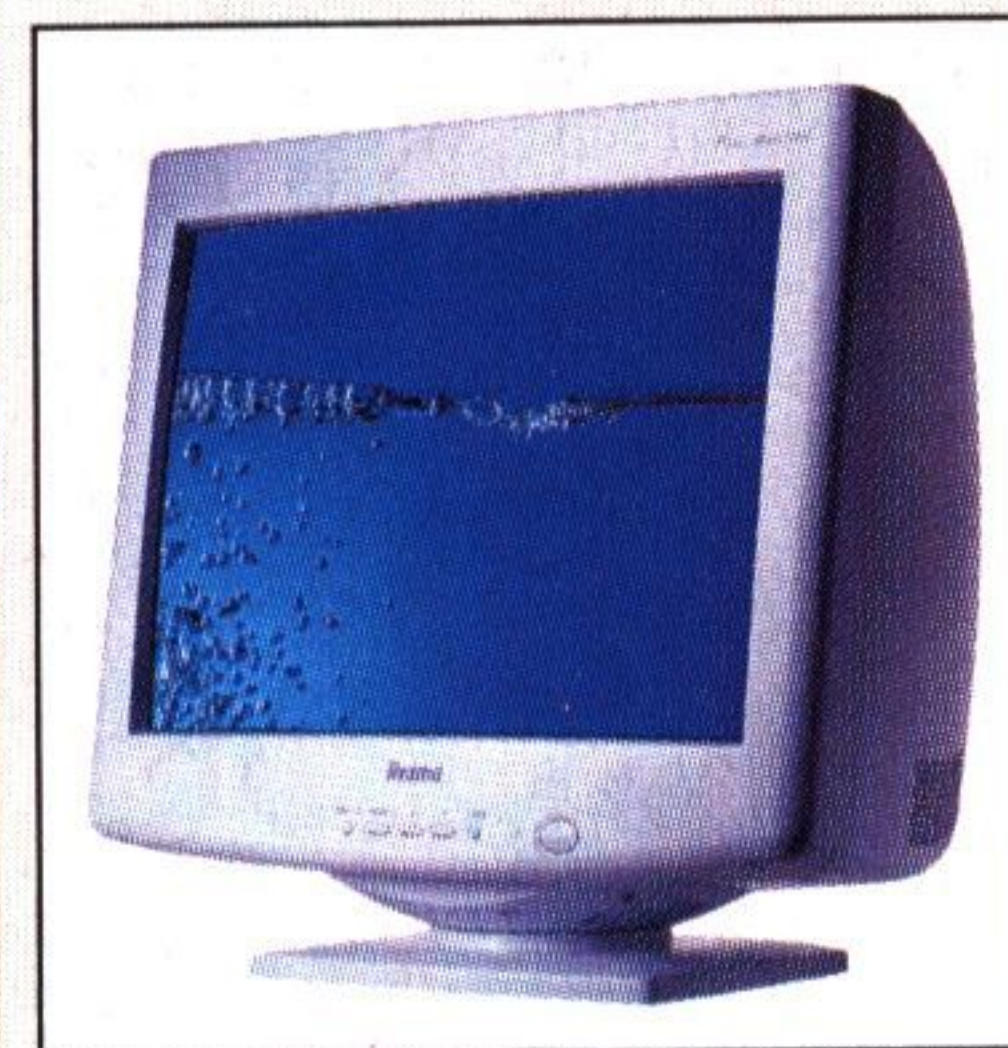
#### SEAGATE BARRACUDA ATA IV 60GB

**STREET PRICE** £82 inc VAT  
**TELEPHONE** 01628 890366

**MANUFACTURER** Seagate  
**WEBSITE** [www.seagate.com](http://www.seagate.com)

We have a new Best Buy hard drive – the 60Gb Seagate Barracuda ATA IV. The IBM Deskstar 75GXP drives are looking a bit long in the tooth alongside this modern beastie. Although it's a 7,200 RPM drive, it runs both cooler and quieter than its peers, which can only be a good thing. Fully loaded with a 2Mb cache, the performance is solid across the board, both in terms of average seek times and sustained data throughput. We recommend the 60Gb drive on the basis that it seems pretty good value for money, though the range also offers 20, 40 and 80Gb variants.

### MONITOR



#### IYYAMA VM PRO 512 22IN

**STREET PRICE** £633  
**TELEPHONE** 01438 745482

**MANUFACTURER** iiyama  
**WEBSITE** [www.iiyama.co.uk](http://www.iiyama.co.uk)

Our long-standing Best Buy monitor, the VM Pro 510, is superseded by the 512. Equipped with the latest Mitsubishi aperture grille Diamondtron screen, it has a rather smaller viewable area than suggested, closer to 20 inches than 22, but gives outstanding results at resolutions up to 2048x1536 at 85Hz – something many graphics cards can't even support. If your video card has the bandwidth, you can rely on this monitor to give you pin-sharp results at 1600x1200. There's also the useful inclusion of a four-port USB hub as well as a pair of speakers – even if they do sound a bit tinny.

### GRAPHICS CARD

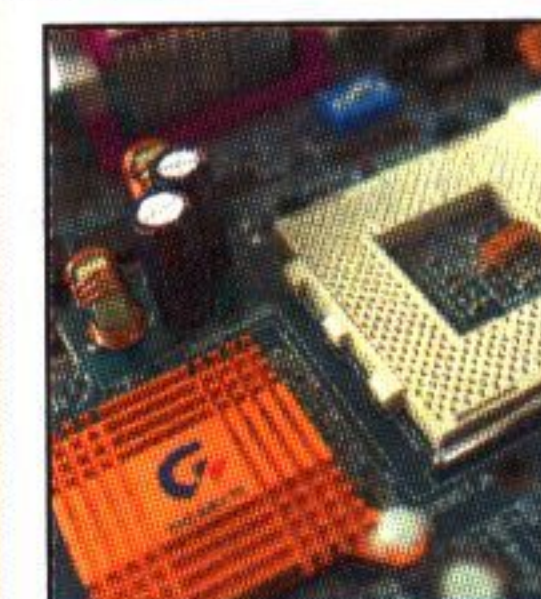


#### VISIONTEK XSTASY GEFORCE 4 TI4600

**STREET PRICE** £323 inc VAT  
**TELEPHONE** N/A

**MANUFACTURER** VisionTek  
**WEBSITE** [www.visiontek.com/uk](http://www.visiontek.com/uk)

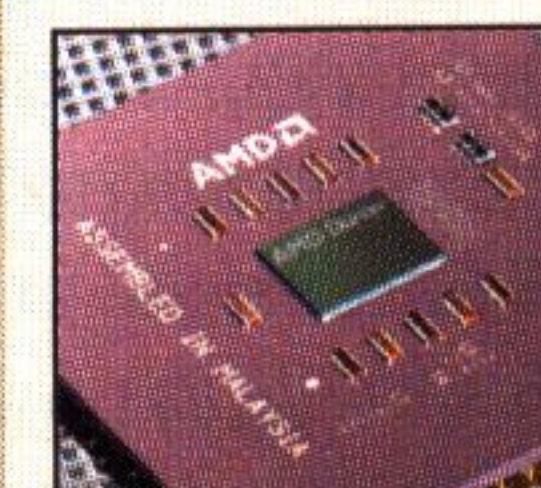
We've just had the first batch of GeForce 4 cards cross the PC ZONE bench, and we have a new high-end winner – though it's gonna cost you an arm and a leg for the time being. Move over GeForce 3 Ti500 – here comes the GeForce 4 Titanium 4600, supplied by VisionTek. The clever memory architecture of the GeForce 4 Titanium processor, coupled with 650MHz DDR memory, gives this card bandwidth fearsome enough to cope with FSAA, as well as high resolutions – at blistering frame-rates. It's faster than Radeon, and faster than GeForce 3. It even blows Xbox out of the water. Price shown is a conversion of the Euro RRP; no street price is available yet.



#### GIGABYTE GA-7VTXH

**STREET PRICE** £83 inc VAT  
**MANUFACTURER** Gigabyte  
**TELEPHONE** 01908 362700  
**WEBSITE** [www.gbt-tech.co.uk](http://www.gbt-tech.co.uk)

Usurps another great Gigabyte board – this one is a great Via KT266A-based DDR solution. Integrated are both 10/100 LAN and four-channel audio from Creative. In testing it proved stable and among the faster DDR boards for Athlon. A complete bargain.



#### DURON 1.3 GHz

**STREET PRICE** £63  
**MANUFACTURER** AMD  
**TELEPHONE** N/A  
**WEBSITE** [www.amd.com](http://www.amd.com)

Durons are basically Athlons with smaller Level 2 (L2) processor caches. This still compares favourably with Intel's ageing Celeron chip cache structure. Besides, Duron still has the blistering Floating Point Unit (FPU) mathematical calculation speed, making it a top processor for gamers.



#### SEAGATE U SERIES 6 40GB

**STREET PRICE** £61 inc VAT  
**MANUFACTURER** Seagate  
**TELEPHONE** 01628 890366  
**WEBSITE** [www.seagate.com](http://www.seagate.com)

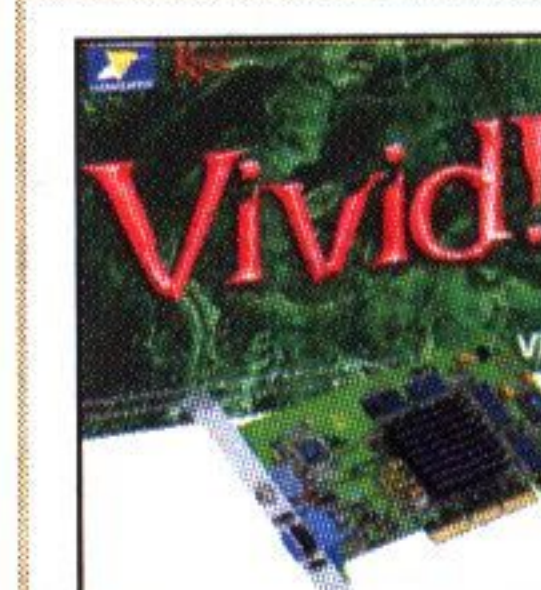
The U Series 5 drives are now pretty much unavailable, but is replaced in the Buyer's Guide by its own replacement. The U Series 6 drive has much the same spec as the Series 5, but runs quieter and cooler. We've also uprated capacity to 40Gb – great value.



#### HANSOL 710P 17IN

**STREET PRICE** £135 inc VAT  
**MANUFACTURER** Hansol  
**TELEPHONE** 01252 360400  
**WEBSITE** [www.hansol-uk.com](http://www.hansol-uk.com)

For the budget-conscious gamer, Hansol is a company well worth a look. With a fabulously low price, it will handle 1024x768 with a vertical refresh rate of 85Hz, and 1600x1200 at a creditable 75Hz. There's not a lot that'll touch this for the money.



#### VIDEOLOGIC VIVID!XS 32MB

**STREET PRICE** £71 inc VAT  
**MANUFACTURER** VideoLogic  
**TELEPHONE** 01923 277488  
**WEBSITE** [www.videologic.com](http://www.videologic.com)

The new Kyro II chipset blows its slower Kyro brethren to smithereens at 175MHz clock speed. The 32Mb Vivid!XS replaces the Hercules 3D Prophet 4500 as Best Budget Buy – but only just, there's barely anything to choose between the two.



## ◀ BEST BUDGET

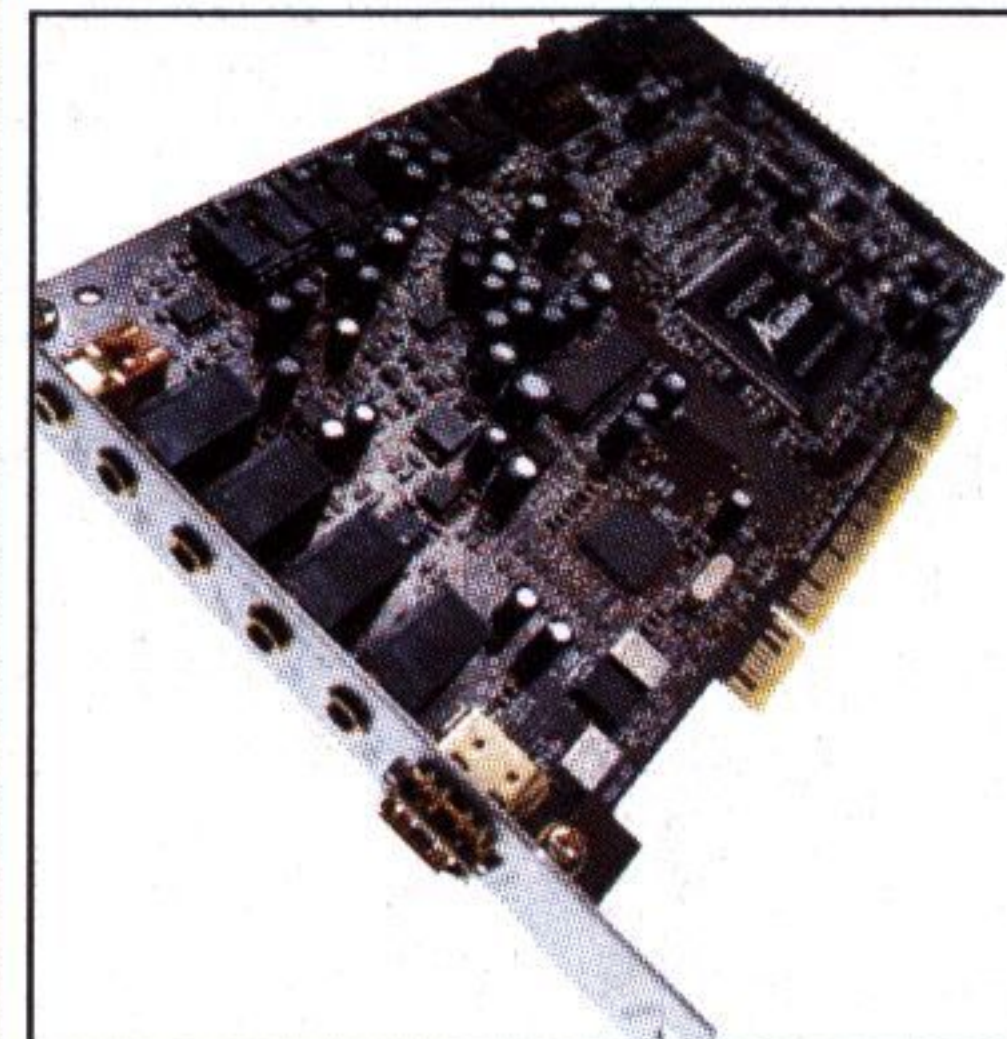


### HERCULES GAMESURROUND FORTISSIMO II

**STREET PRICE** £31 inc VAT  
**MANUFACTURER** Hercules  
**TELEPHONE** (020) 8686 5600  
**WEBSITE** www.hercules-uk.com

This four-channel audio card represents excellent value for money. You can even get four channels of surround sound from your DVD movies with a special version of PowerDVD!

WAS £36  
NOW £31



### CREATIVE LABS SOUND BLASTER AUDIGY PLAYER

**STREET PRICE** £79 inc VAT  
**TELEPHONE** N/A

**MANUFACTURER** Creative Labs  
**WEBSITE** www.europe.creative.com

The SonicFury gets pipped to the post by the excellent new Audigy Player from Creative Labs. Successor to the very successful Sound Blaster Live! series, the Audigy has an audio engine four times as powerful, excellent audio quality, and a range of features that makes it the most versatile all-round gaming/music/DVD soundcard. EAX Advanced HD adds a range of new 3D audio features, though it'll be a while before games filter through with support for the more esoteric options. It's about £20 more expensive than its main competition, but we reckon it's well worth it.

SOUNDCARDS



### MICROSOFT GAMEVOICE USB

**STREET PRICE** £34 inc VAT  
**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100  
**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/sidewinder/

So how can a set of budget headphones cost almost as much as our Best Buy? Simple – the GameVoice enables you to talk to your mates over the Internet. It works very well, and as they double as a more than decent set of headphones, they're a bit of a bargain.

WAS £49  
NOW £34



### SENNHEISER HD 200 MASTER

**STREET PRICE** £45  
**TELEPHONE** 01494 551 551

**MANUFACTURER** Sennheiser  
**WEBSITE** www.sennheiser.co.uk

This German audio company has been around for more than 50 years, and was founded by the suitably Teutonic-sounding Dr Fritz Sennheiser. The HD 200s are actually targeted at DJs, and for very good reason. They're very, very loud and they're also very, very strong. They feature a closed back design, which means you can hear nearby rocket jumpers quite comfortably. And, crucially for those extended gaming sessions, they're comfortable and light, weighing in at around 140g. A great pair of cans at a top price – well, what you waiting for?

HEADPHONES

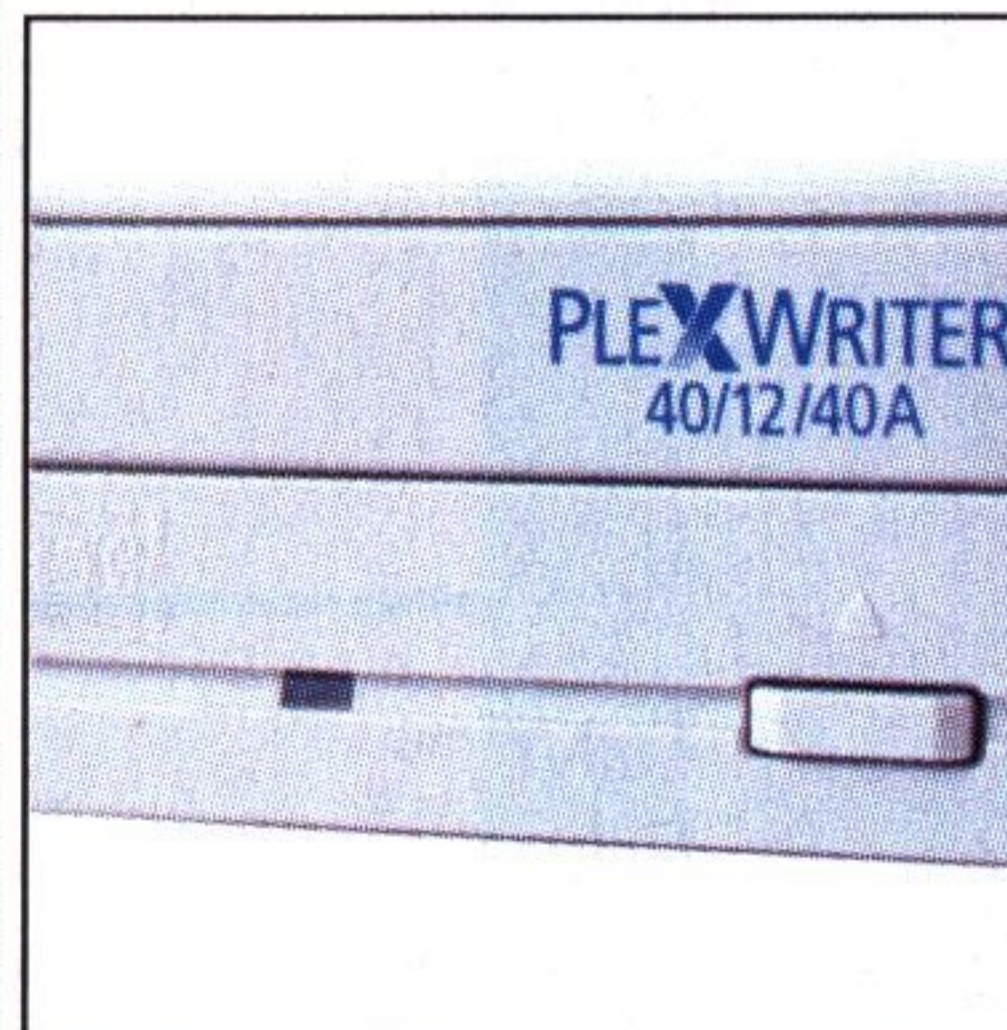


### YAMAHA CRW3200E-VK

**STREET PRICE** £101  
**MANUFACTURER** Yamaha  
**TELEPHONE** N/A  
**WEBSITE:** www.yamaha-it.de

Yamaha has been making great CD-RW drives, and the 3200 is the company's current range-topper. We love its AudioMaster burning mode for high-quality audio CD burning. You will too. A veritable bargain.

WAS £112  
NOW £101



### PLEXTOR PX-W4012TA

**STREET PRICE** £111  
**TELEPHONE** +32 2 725 5522

**MANUFACTURER** Plextor  
**WEBSITE** www.plextor.com

Plextor once again take top honours with a superfast 40x Write, 12x ReWrite and 40x Read drive. No matter what task you throw at it, it simply zips along, and BURN-Proof technology stops buffer underruns (where the data flow from the burner's cache to the burner is interrupted) from rendering the drive a coffee placemat machine. Particularly nifty is its PowerRec II technology which analyses the quality of the blank media being used and adjusts the write speed downwards if necessary. All in all, we reckon this is the best drive out there – and it's shipped with Nero 5, another major bonus.

WAS £138  
NOW £111

CDRW DRIVES



### SAITEK CYBORG 3D GOLD

**STREET PRICE** £30  
**MANUFACTURER** Saitek  
**TELEPHONE** 01454 451900  
**WEBSITE** www.saitek.com

Saitek's current generation of sticks are fabulous. The Cyborg Gold is a top-line USB stick that excels across the board. The design is superb, both strong and adjustable – even the left-handed are catered for – and its response and accuracy can only be described as unequalled.

WAS £62  
NOW £49



### MICROSOFT SIDEWINDER FORCE FEEDBACK 2

**STREET PRICE** £49 inc VAT  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100

**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft

**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/products/hardware/sidewinder/sidewinder.htm

Force feedback products aren't everyone's cup of tea, but nothing comes close to the SideWinder FF2. It's a huge, heavy tabletop affair, with the power transformer built into the base. An infrared sensor causes the stick to leap to attention when you grasp it, which might be a bit startling, but is still rather good. The force feedback routines work extremely well – mainly because the motors are so powerful. If more games made better use of the technology, it would be a must-have piece of gear.

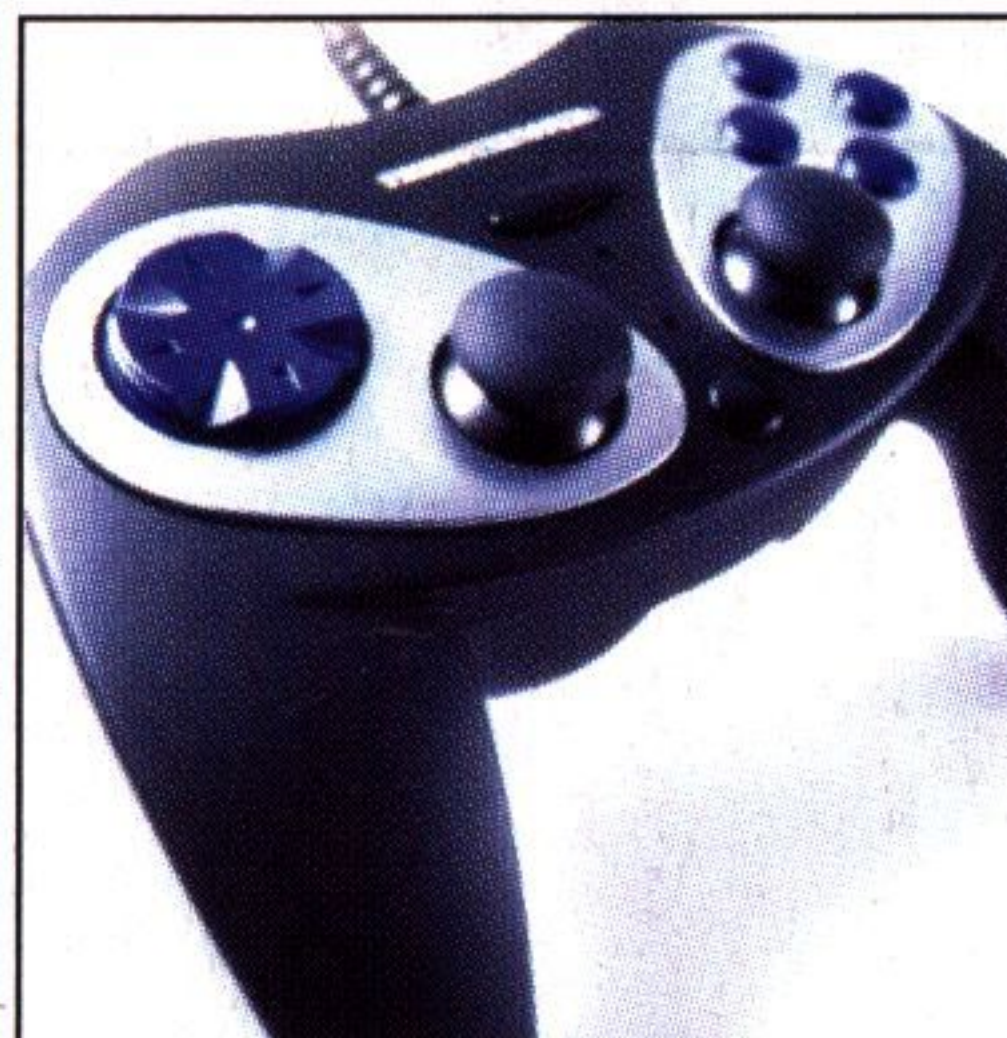
JOYSTICKS



### SIDEWINDER PLUG 'N' PLAY

**STREET PRICE** £12  
**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft  
**TELEPHONE** (0870) 601 0100  
**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/sidewinder/

Four buttons, two triggers, directional pad, USB. Dead simple, dead effective and really rather cheap. The Plug 'n' Play Gamepad is the new basic controller from the Seattle Sidewinders and comes in funky transparent plastic, in contrast to the gloomy black pads of yesteryear.



### THRUSTMASTER FIRESTORM DUAL-POWER GAMEPAD

**STREET PRICE** £26  
**TELEPHONE** (020) 8686 5600

**MANUFACTURER** Thrustmaster  
**WEBSITE** www.thrustmaster.co.uk

We may not be that fond of Thrustmaster's joysticks, but this force feedback joypad and its non-force feedback cousin, the Firestorm Dual Analogue, are superbly designed. The Firestorm Dual Power sports no fewer than 13 control buttons, not to mention the twin analogue directional hats. As a result, it's one of the most versatile controllers on the market, equally at home with arcade-style games that need digital pads or flight sims requiring more progressive analogue control. Also included is Thrustmapper software that allows you to customise its behaviour in any game. Delicious, especially at this price.

GAMEPADS



### HERCULES XPS210

**STREET PRICE** £40 inc VAT  
**MANUFACTURER** Hercules  
**TELEPHONE** 020 8665 1881  
**WEBSITE** www.hercules-uk.com

This small but perfectly formed 2.1 speaker set is cheap – but doesn't sound it. With tone controls and stereo enhancement, it's an ideal solution for desktop gaming. The satellites and subwoofer are well matched, giving a decent overall sound. And adorned in royal blue, it looks the part too...



### KLIPSCH PROMEDIA 4.1

**STREET PRICE** £299  
**MANUFACTURER** Klipsch  
**TELEPHONE** 0031 314 383 699

**WEBSITE** www.klipsch.com

Take your pick for Best Buy between the stunning Klipsch 4.1 THX-approved speakers and the cheaper long-term favourites Sirocco Crossfire from Videologic. Both represent great value for money, but the Klipsch edges it in the listenability stakes, hence their new entry here. They're beautifully made, sound amazing and are the first speakers that can split your ears just as well as the Crossfires. You'll find no better speaker set-up for watching DVDs and playing games on PC. Your neighbours will love it.

SPEAKERS



# 3 RISK-FREE

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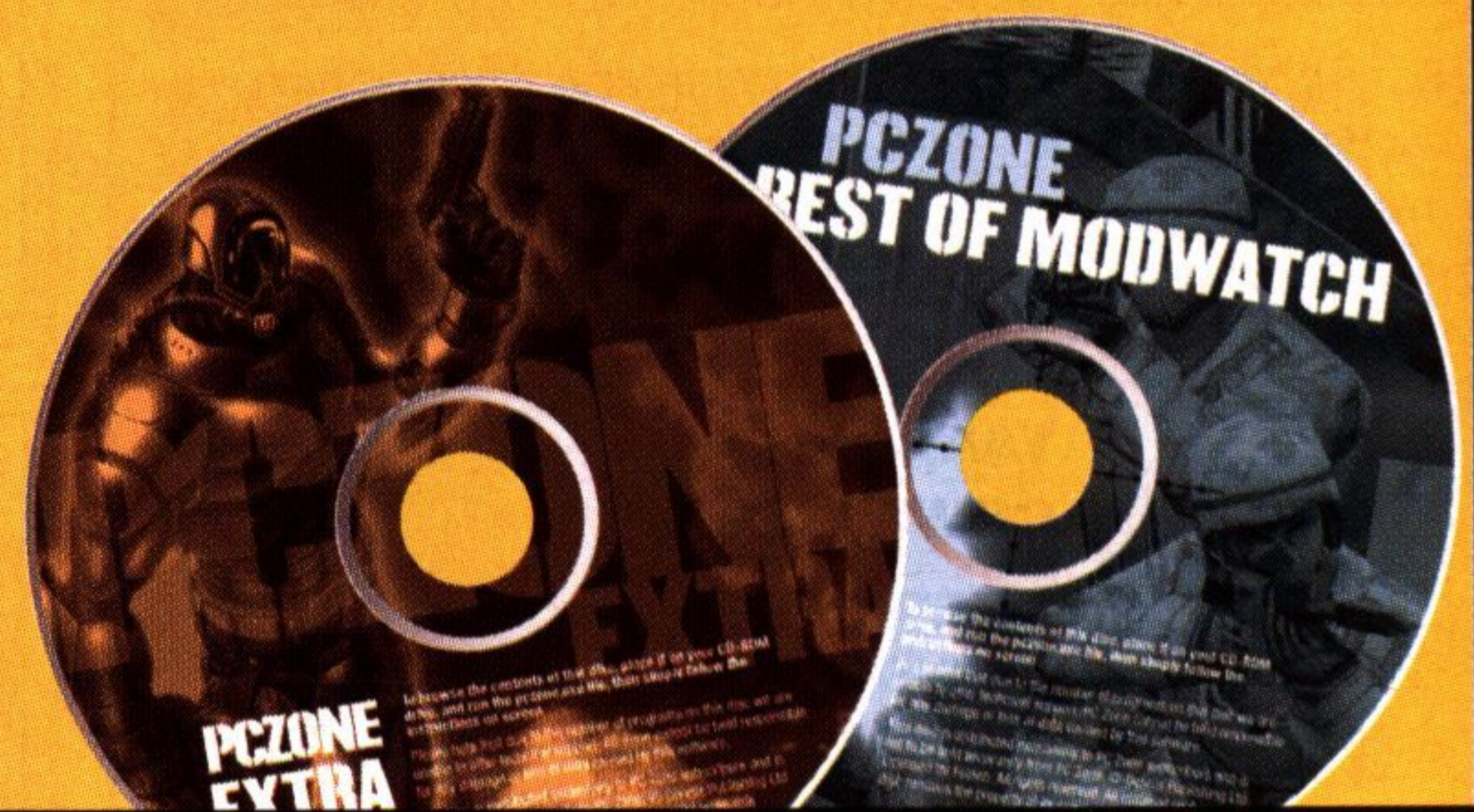
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Order Ref: P208A

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...get these  
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 whichever option  
 you choose:

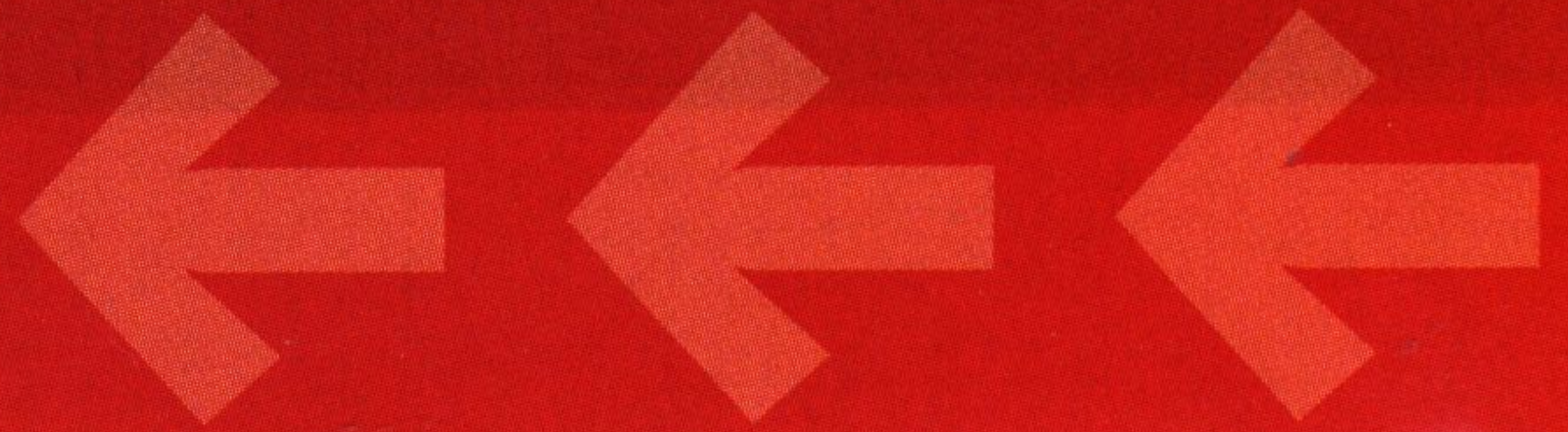
### PCZONE EXTRA

Patches and extended play for your favourite games, including **Counterstrike**, **Half-Life** and **Navy Seals**

### BEST OF MODWATCH

A round-up of the latest and best games modifications, including **Half-Life**, **Unreal Tournament**, **Quake III** AND the latest version of **CounterStrike**.

All gifts subject to availability. Allow 28 days for delivery. Please note that Windows 95 is required for most programs on the FREE CD ROMs and that most of them have limited functionality.





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# EXTENDED PLAY

Finishing a game is only the beginning in Extended Play. Maps, mods, add-ons and extras are all here to help you get the most out of your games

## POWER PLAY



### MOVING ON UP Rhianna Pratchett

▲ After 18 months of working on *PC ZONE* I've finally made it to editor. OK, so it's only for a day and a half while Richie is in Dallas and the rest of the team are at E3, but I'm there. Unfortunately there's no one else here for me to oppress with my new-found editorial powers – not even a work experience person to victimise.

I think I'll have to ring Phil Wand and bully him over the phone, just to make sure he gets this month's survival guide to the *PC ZONE* servers in on time. Ahh, luckily he did, and you'll find it on page 112.

If you're wondering, we've just moved our game servers onto spanking new Jolt hardware, which means that you can now play all your favourite games without experiencing any lag. Check 'em out and I'll see you there. When you're done, check out Tony Lamb's round-up of the latest mods in the Mod Squad this month on page 116, where you can get the lowdown on the latest release of *Tactical Ops 3.1.5 – Assault On Terror*.

▼ All that's left is for me to do is apologise to Alan Stonebridge in the Electronic Publishing Unit for leaving him off my thank you list last month. Thanks for all your hard work mate. Now I'm off to make my own tea. There's no justice in this world.

## A Jedi you will be

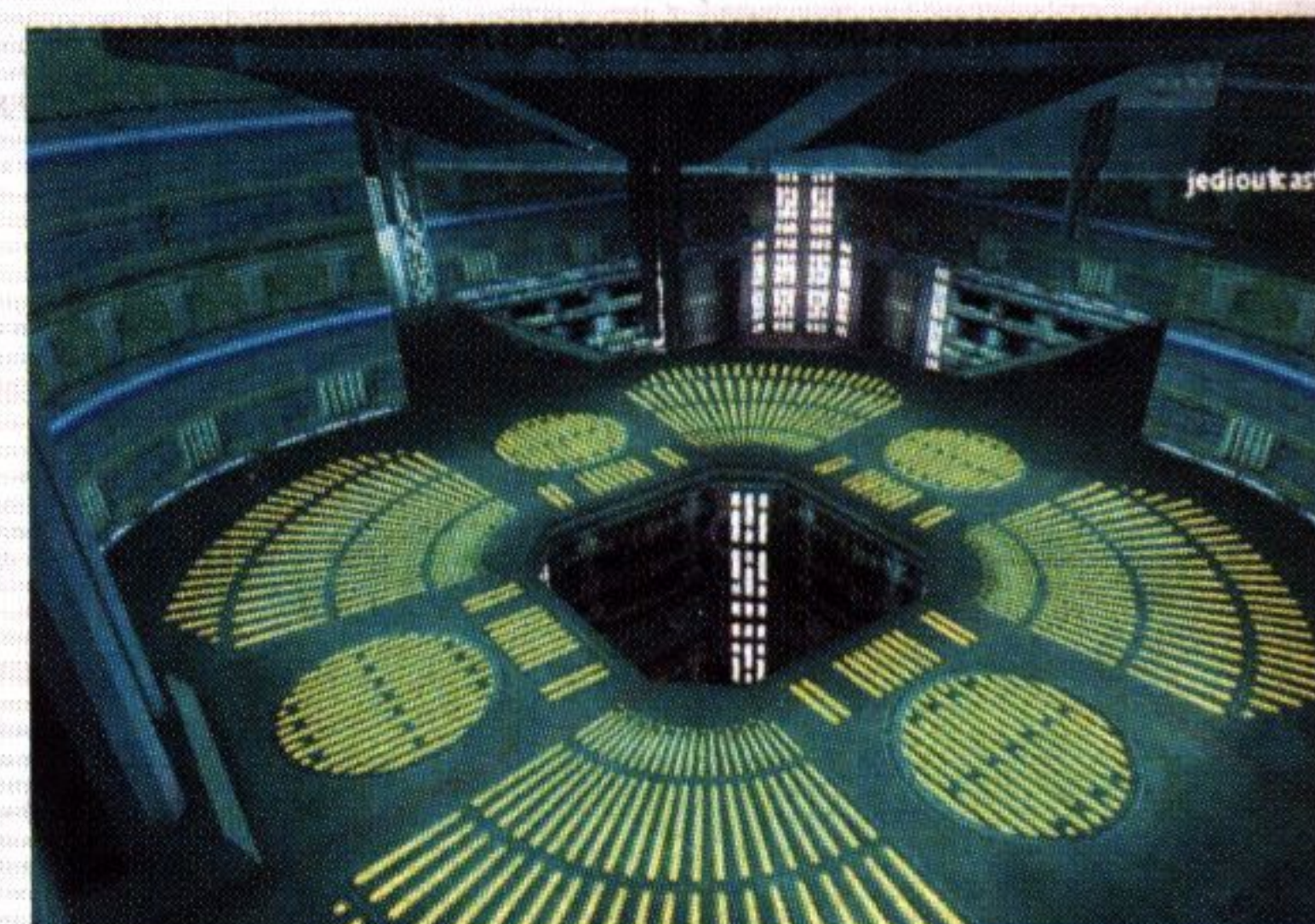
ON THE  
CD  
DVD

Let us transport you to a galaxy far, far away

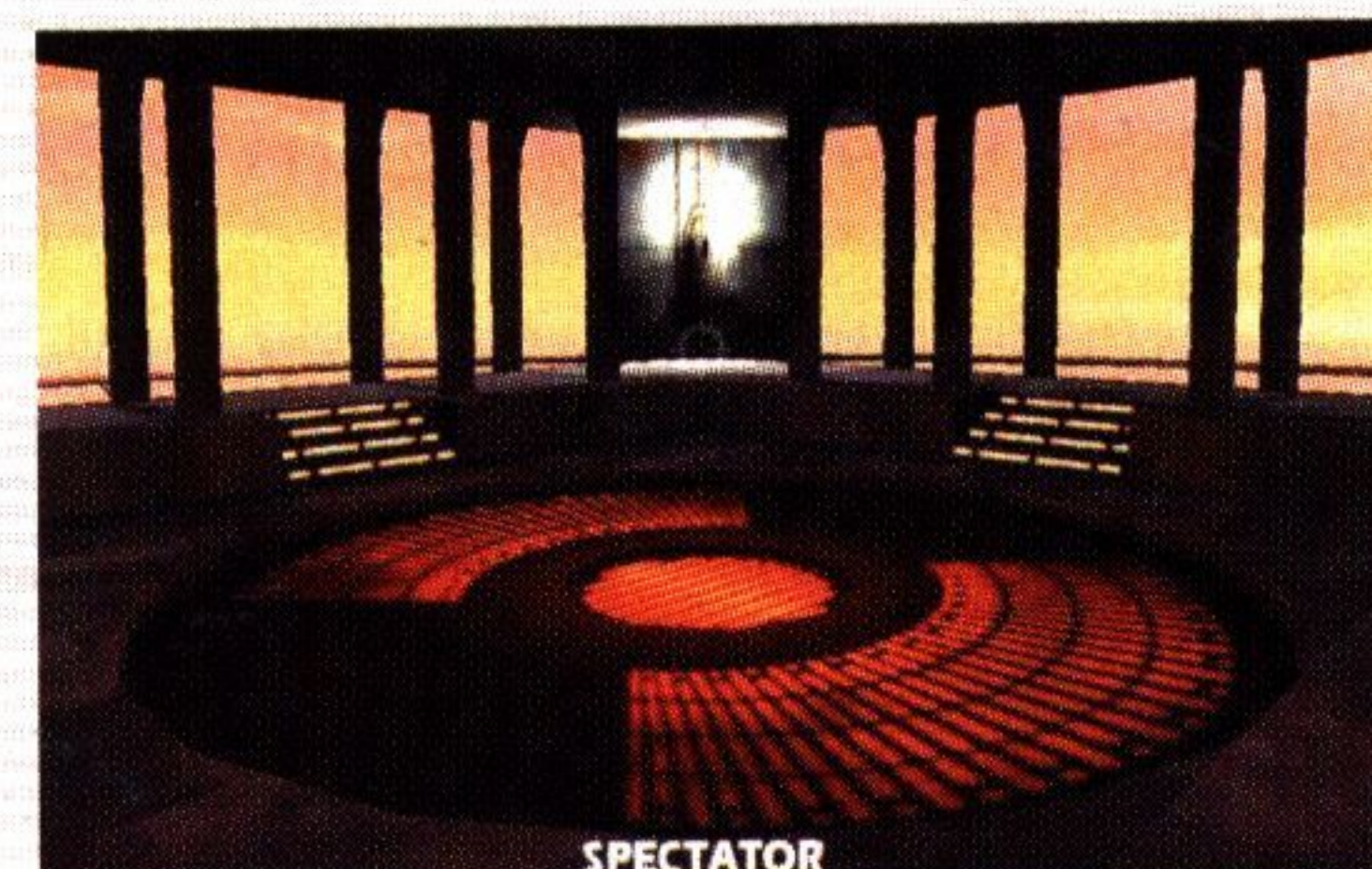
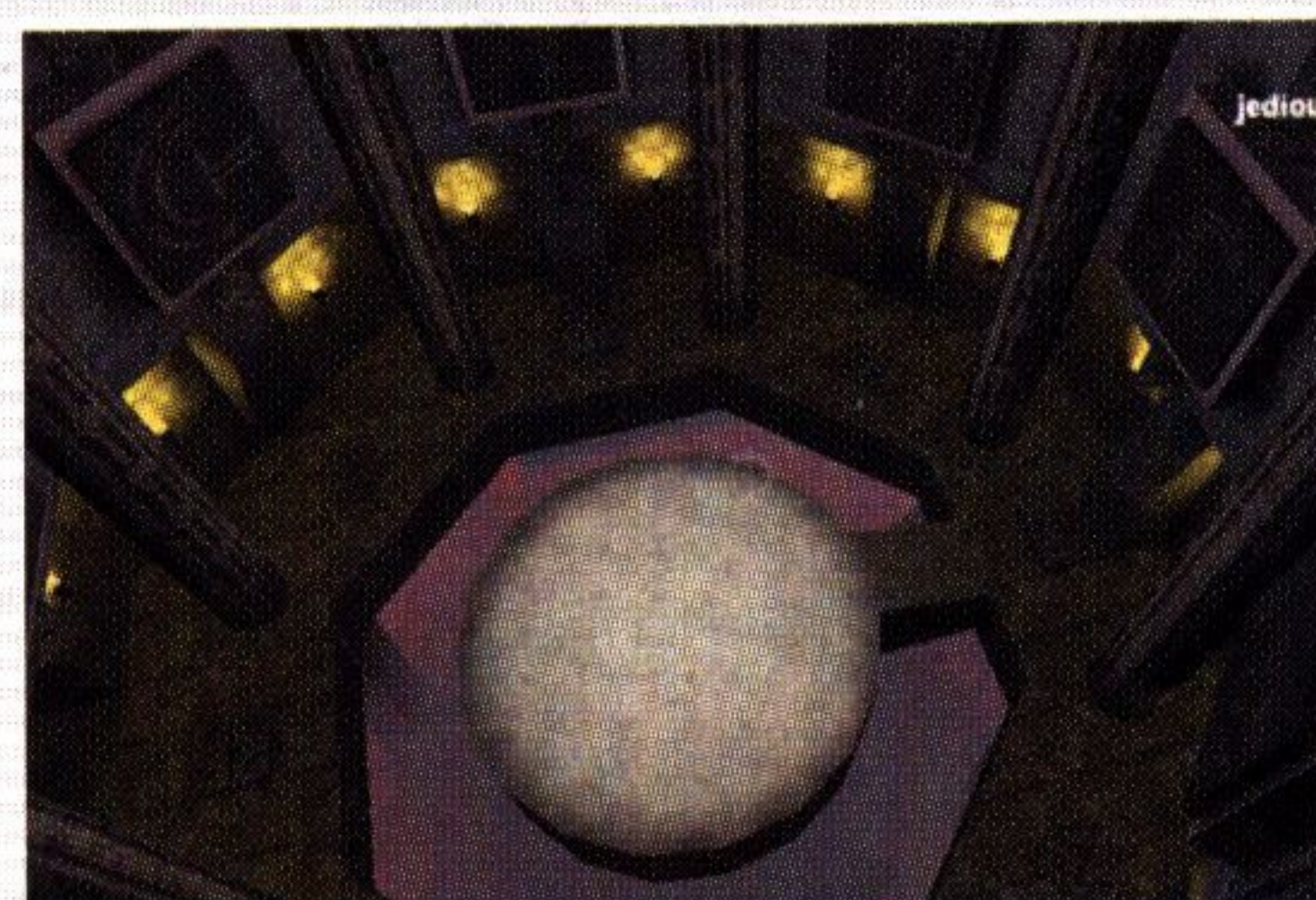
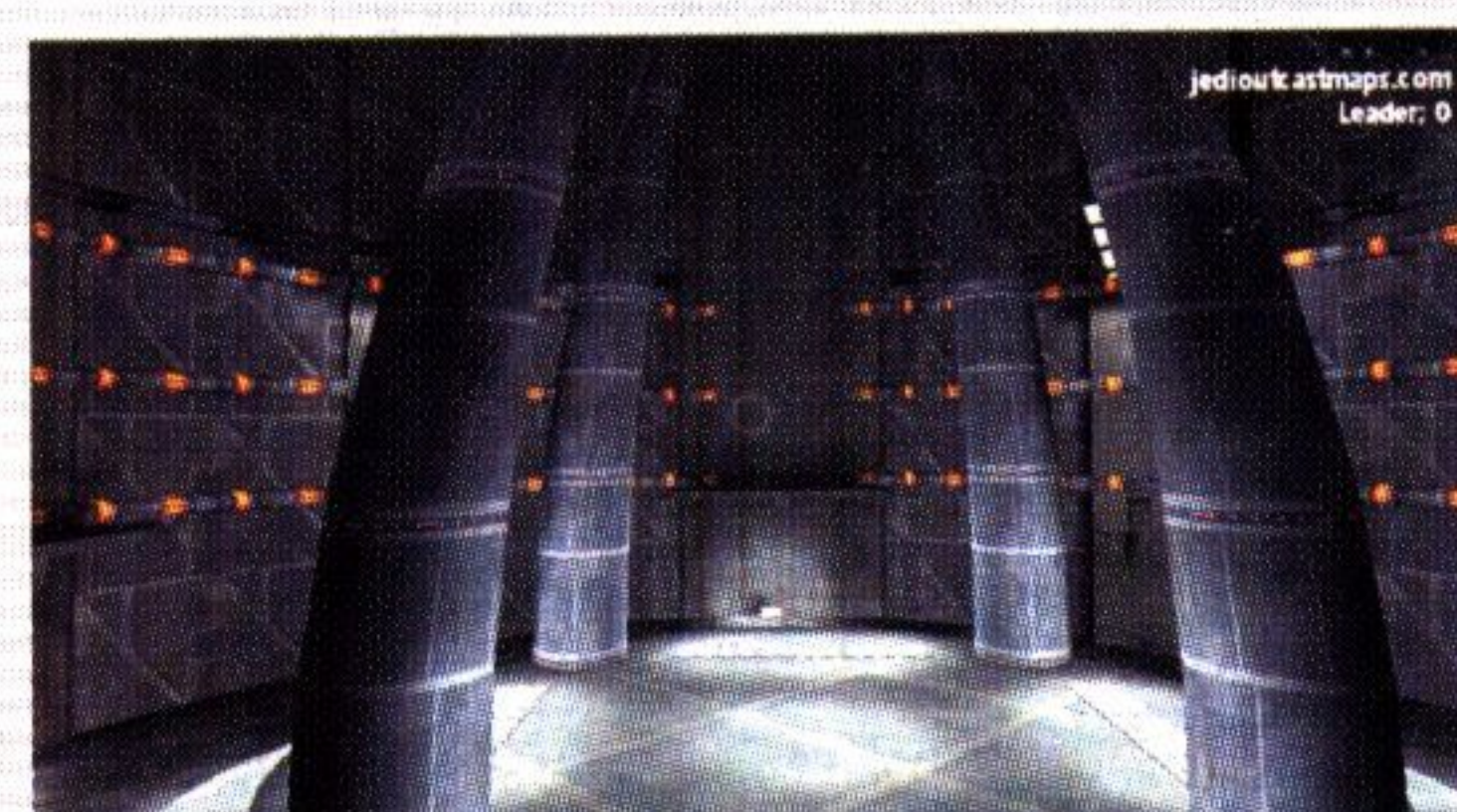
www.jedioutcastmaps.com



Put your Jedi powers to work in the Bepin Duel Chamber.



Being a Jedi never looked so good.



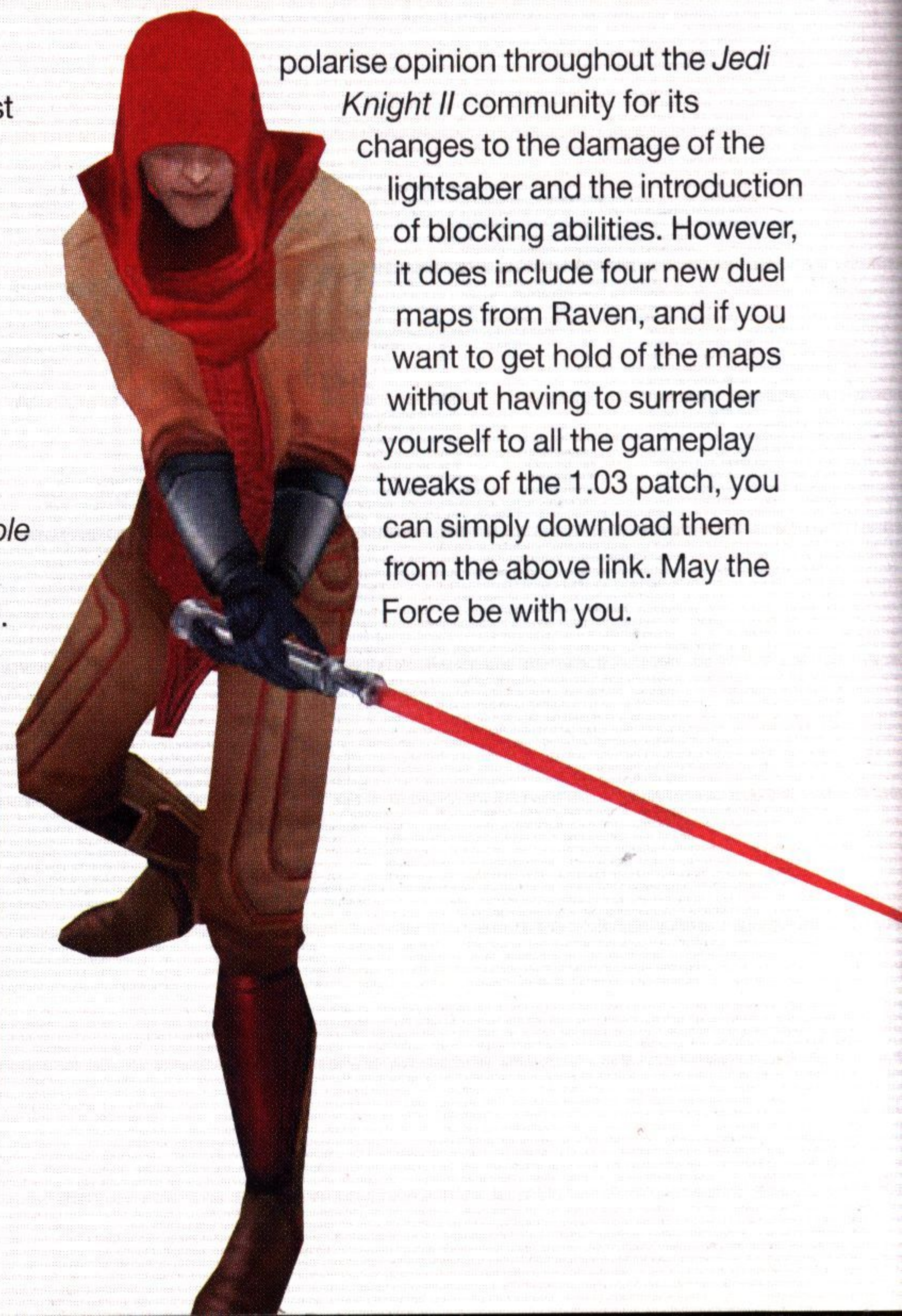
Action on the Bepia Cloud Platform.

**IF STAR WARS:** *Attack Of The Clones* and *Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast* have got you wishing you lived someplace where all a man can trust is his lightsaber, then look to our CDs for a host of Jedi loveliness.

We've got the long-awaited demo for *Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast* (see the disc pages on page 118 for more info and a walkthrough) and we've also included the latest 1.03 update patch and a load of *JKII* maps, which have been cropping up everywhere since the official SDK was released last month. We've selected eight of the best new maps around for our coverdiscs, including the *Carbonite Crusher*, which is best played with your Jedi Force powers on full, *The Star Destroyer* and *The Death Star Hanger*. There are also maps inspired by other films, such as *Face Off Version 2* and the *Temple Of La Magra*, which you may recognise from the end of *Blade*.

The latest 1.03 update patch has managed to

polarise opinion throughout the *Jedi Knight II* community for its changes to the damage of the lightsaber and the introduction of blocking abilities. However, it does include four new duel maps from Raven, and if you want to get hold of the maps without having to surrender yourself to all the gameplay tweaks of the 1.03 patch, you can simply download them from the above link. May the Force be with you.



## CHEATS AHOY!

When we dropped CheatMaster from our Extended Play pages we had a lot of letters of complaint, but you'll be happy to hear that we have now incorporated loads of cheats onto your cover disc. Just click on CheatStation in Extended Play for this month's goodies, including cheats for *Warrior Kings*,

*Freedom Force*, *The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind*, *Hooligans: Storm Over Europe*, *Empire Earth*, *Commandos 2: Men Of Courage*, *Conquest: Frontier Wars* and *Red Faction*. If none of this lot appeals to you then you can get more than 40,000 cheats online at [www.pczone.co.uk](http://www.pczone.co.uk).





## 112 THE GUIDE

How to get on the ZONE servers



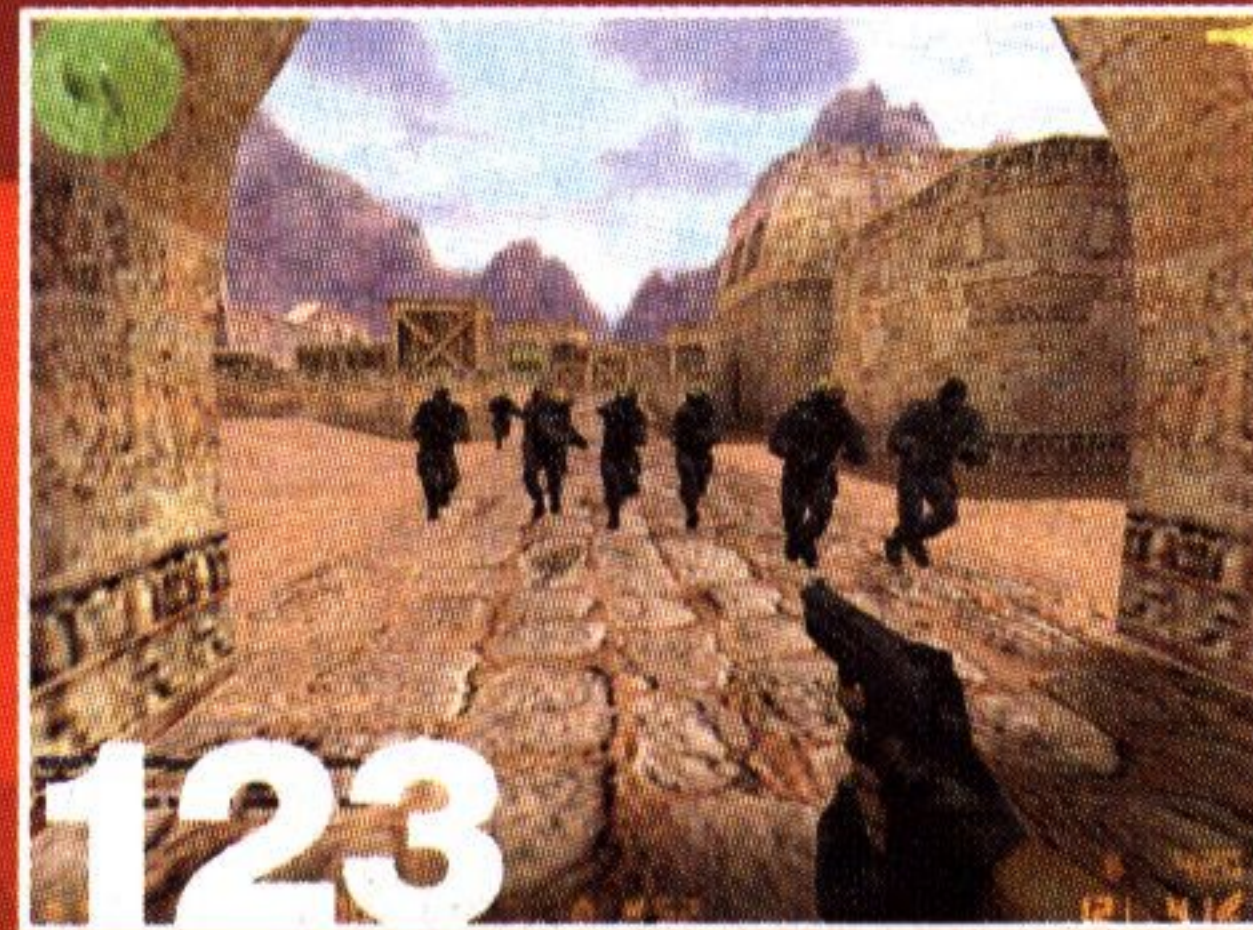
## 116 THE MODSQUAD

Parkas at the ready...



## 118 DISC PAGES

Play the latest demos



## 123 FIGHT CLUB

Come and 'ave a go...

# Monkey business

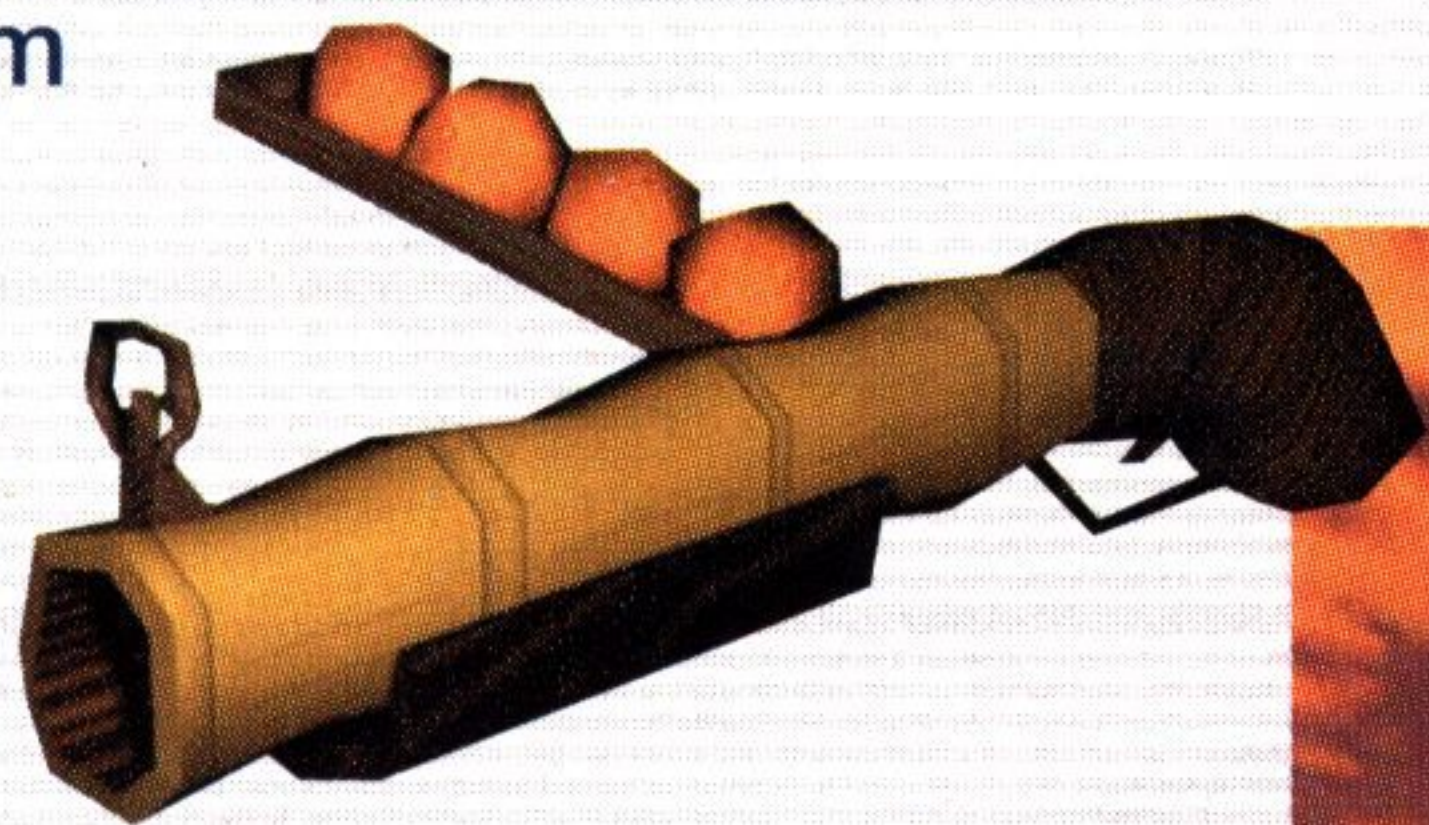
Go ape over this latest mod for *Half-Life*

■ [www.monkeystrike.com](http://www.monkeystrike.com)

## COUNTER-Strike

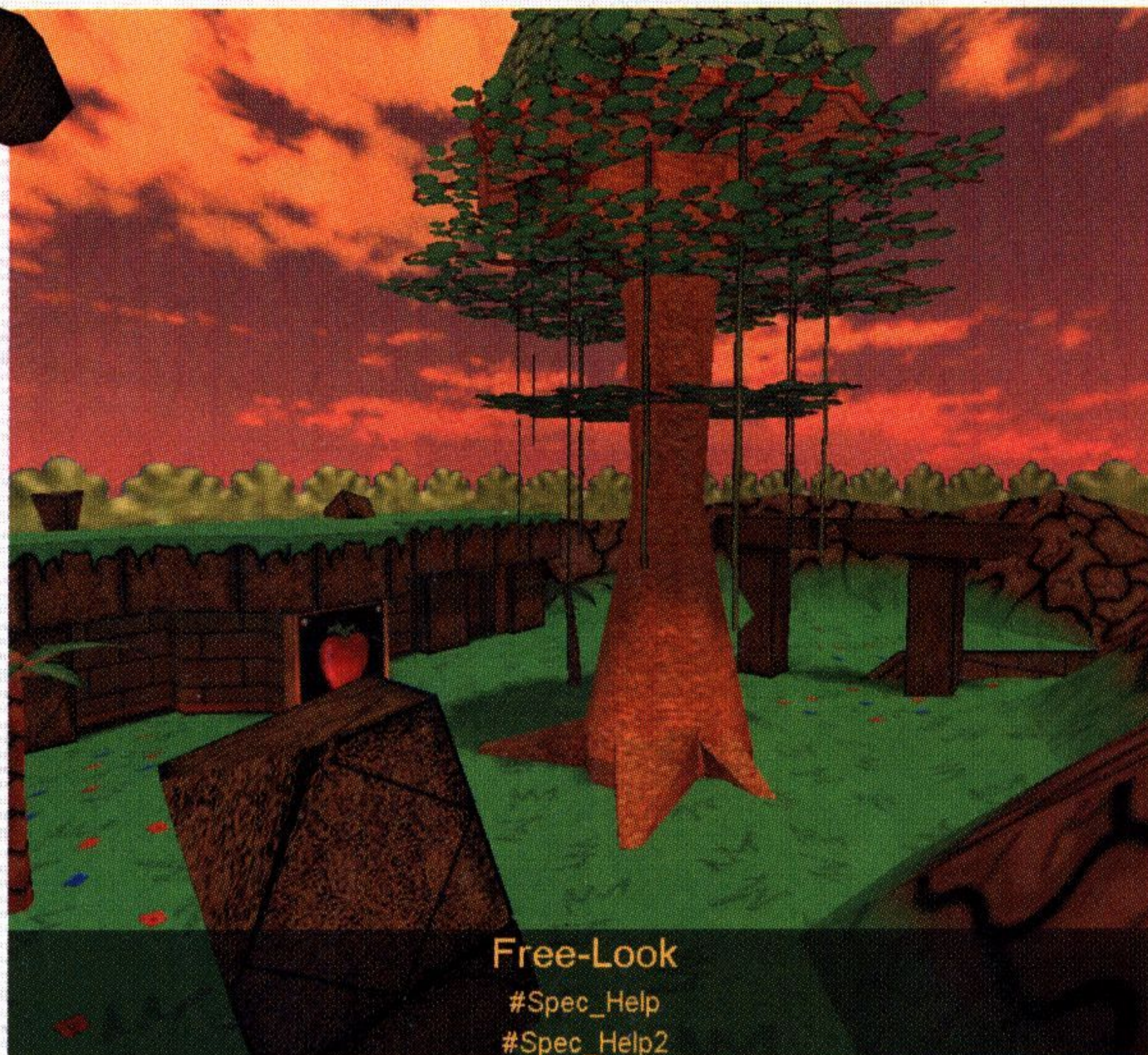
inspired a multitude of terrorist versus counter-terrorist mods. More than we could ever have imagined, and certainly more than we ever wanted to play. But at the end of the day, one man in camouflage gear and a balaclava is very much like another and slowly the variety – and more importantly, the fun – of such mods has been worn down. It's exactly this 'fun' aspect that the team behind *Monkey Strike* is hoping to inject back into the modding scene.

It's *Counter-Strike* with monkeys, although some would argue that's what every game of *Counter-Strike* is anyway. But this time it's real monkeys, and gorillas, orang-utans and various



other primates. When the mod is fully developed you'll be able to take your monkey or teams of monkeys through deathmatch, team deathmatch, fruity sacrifice and capture the golden banana modes.

The team has also developed a number of bizarre fruit-inspired weapons, such as the melonpip-gattling gun and the ananas-launcher, which should prove to be interesting alternatives to the usual array of 'realistic' weaponry. AK-47? Nah, banana-crossbow every time, mate!



Free-Look

#Spec\_Help

#Spec\_Help2

Warning: a grapefruit in the wrong hands can be lethal.

## Bid For Power

■ [www.planetquake.com/bidforpower/](http://www.planetquake.com/bidforpower/)

**THE BID** For Power total conversion for *Quake III Arena*, is still somewhat of a newbie in the modding community, having only had its debut at the start of this year. Now, less than five months on, the dedicated team behind this Japanese anime-influenced conversion – where you get the fast-paced gameplay of *QIII* but using Ki-powered fighters – have released a second beta, *Bid For Power 1.2*. The new upgrade includes six new attacks for your fighters, three new maps and a great deal of bug fixing. We'll have the full install on our cover disc next month, but if you simply can't wait that long for it then the upgrade can be downloaded from the link above.

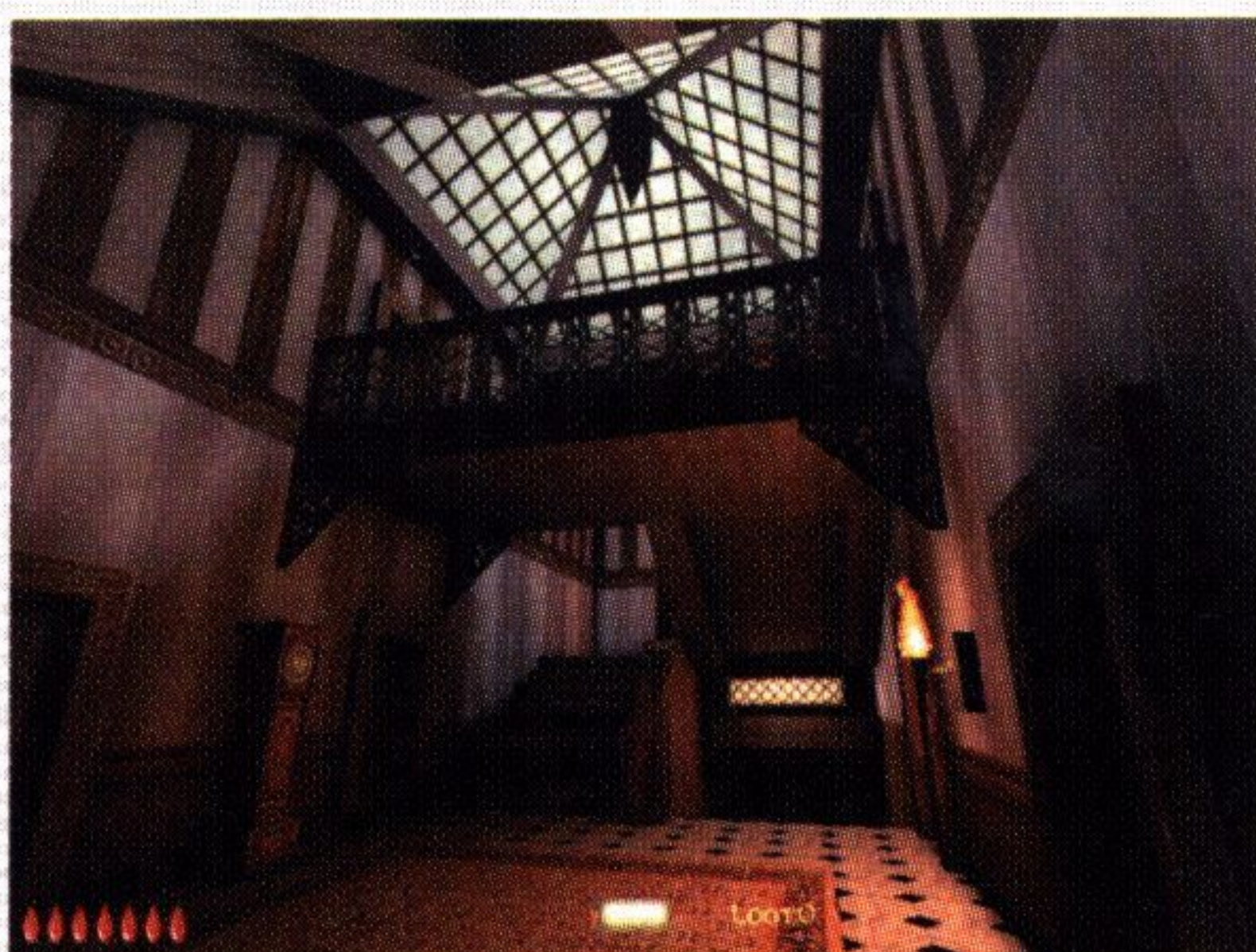


A big dose of power can ruin your day.

## Thievery UT

■ [www.thieveryut.com](http://www.thieveryut.com)

**THIEF II** was always a game that cried out for a multiplayer mode, and if Looking Glass Studios hadn't closed down, then one would have been inevitable. No multiplayer mode has been confirmed for *Thief III* yet, so the best place to find some co-ordinated sneakiness is in *Thievery UT*, a massive *Thief II*-style multiplayer mod for *Unreal Tournament*. *Thievery* pits teams of thieves against teams of guards, although you'll also be able to play against bots and work is underway on a thief vs thief mode. The mod contains features such as rope, ladder and ledge climbing, weapons such as bows and crossbows and more than 11 maps. Watch these pages for a more in-depth review.



The maps in *Thievery UT* look gorgeous.

## Day Of Defeat

■ [www.dayofdefeatmod.com/](http://www.dayofdefeatmod.com/)

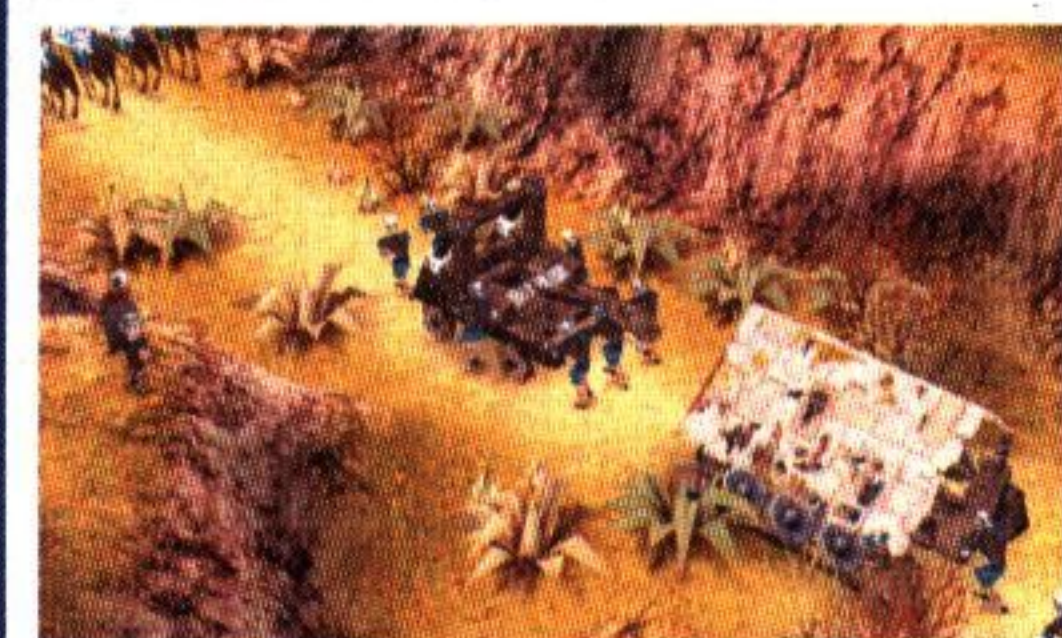
**ON THE DVD** **THE COMPLETE** re-write of *Half-Life* mod *Day Of Defeat* for its Beta 2 release turned out to be a shrewd gamble. The second incarnation of this WWII inspired mod turned out not only to be incredibly rich in detail and ambiance, but also contained a decent amount of features and tweaks to take the gameplay to new levels. This month you'll find the full upgrade from *Day Of Defeat* version 2.0 to the latest version 2.1 on our cover discs. There's a full list of updates with the install, but notable features include modifications to grenade damage and throwing time, the removal of water sniping and two new maps *dod\_koln* and *dod\_cherbourg*.



Upgrade *DoD* this month from our DVD.

## SHORTS

### ROME FROM HOME



**ON THE DVD** *Praetorians* is undoubtedly one of the most eagerly anticipated RTS games of this year. It comes from Spain's Pyro Studios, developers of *Commandos 1* and *2*. *Praetorians* is designed to bring the trials and tribulations of the Roman Empire into a beautiful 3D world. Check out the movie on our discs.

### ESSENTIAL SELECTION



**ON THE DVD** From this month onwards we will be featuring exclusively on the PC ZONE DVD a definitive collection of what we consider to be the most essential patches and drivers for your gaming needs. This month we have more than 673MBs of patches including the best for *MoH* and *RTCW*, plus drivers from NVIDIA, VideoLogic and ATI.

### HIT OR MYTH



**ON THE DVD** We're also bringing you more RTS goodness this month with some four-minute movies from *Age Of Mythology*. Each movie demonstrates various aspects of the game including tornadoes, scarabs and minotaurs.

### DIVINE DOCTOR



**ON THE DVD** If you're having any sort of problems at all running last month's exclusive demo of the epic RPG *Divine Divinity*, then try installing the latest patch off our cover disc, which comes courtesy of Larian Studios. The patch will fix any installation problems you might be having and also fixes any difficulties you may have encountered with the game hanging at certain points.





The PC ZONE servers are full of bastards like this. Come and shoot them.

# WAR DECLARED!

## HOW TO PLAY ON THE NEW ZONE GAME SERVERS



Your favourite games servers are on the move. But where to? And how can you get there? Frag führer *Phil Wand* explains all

**ALTHOUGH** it may only seem like months, it's been two years since our friends at Games-World.net helped us get into the world of online fragging. Sadly, the time has now come for us to pack our bags, say a fond farewell, and move our servers to fresh woods and pastures new. We'd like to say a big thank you to TezZa and Kick at Games-World, and a big yoo-hoo to Lanky and Panzer at Jolt.co.uk.

### JOLT HOLA

Many of you already know Jolt as the people who provide bandwidth for a boggling array of servers covering every popular game from *Alien Vs Predator* to *RTCW*. By the time you've read this, the ZONE servers will have moved in, settled down, and called that network home. Look upon this as an invitation to join in and help dish out the frags.

As before there are ten games servers in all, covering all the top titles such as *Counter-Strike*, *Team Fortress Classic*, *Quake*,

*Unreal Tournament*, and best-selling newcomer *Return To Castle Wolfenstein*. We've also made a permanent home for our Free-For-All server, which once a month will play host to the infamous Free-For-All Challenge (see page 123 for details). The remainder of the time we will be testing out all the latest mods, the silliest game variations, and organising special low-gravity evenings to which you are all cordially invited.

To make things easier, we'll no longer be referring to ZONE games machines by their IP

addresses but by words. The principal is just as before, only this time you'll be typing letters instead of numbers. Just as when you type [www.pczone.co.uk](http://www.pczone.co.uk) in your browser and arrive at the PC ZONE website, typing [ut.zonegames.co.uk](http://ut.zonegames.co.uk) in your game console will take you to our *Unreal Tournament* machine. (See GAME SERVER LIST boxout below.)

This list is always on show at the PC ZONE server website, [www.ZoneGames.co.uk](http://www.ZoneGames.co.uk), and should soon be mirrored at [Jolt.co.uk](http://Jolt.co.uk).

### GAME SERVER LIST

#### GAME SERVER

PCZ Counter-Strike #1  
PCZ Counter-Strike #2  
PCZ Counter-Strike #3  
PCZ Counter-Strike #4  
PCZ Team Fortress Classic #1  
PCZ Team Fortress Classic #2  
PCZ Quake III: Arena  
PCZ Unreal Tournament  
PCZ Return to Castle Wolfenstein  
PCZ Free-For-All

#### NEW ADDRESS

[cs1.zonegames.co.uk](http://cs1.zonegames.co.uk)  
[cs2.zonegames.co.uk](http://cs2.zonegames.co.uk)  
[cs3.zonegames.co.uk](http://cs3.zonegames.co.uk)  
[cs4.zonegames.co.uk](http://cs4.zonegames.co.uk)  
[tfc1.zonegames.co.uk](http://tfc1.zonegames.co.uk)  
[tfc2.zonegames.co.uk](http://tfc2.zonegames.co.uk)  
[q3.zonegames.co.uk](http://q3.zonegames.co.uk)  
[ut.zonegames.co.uk](http://ut.zonegames.co.uk)  
[rtcw.zonegames.co.uk](http://rtcw.zonegames.co.uk)  
[ffa.zonegames.co.uk](http://ffa.zonegames.co.uk)

Of course, things become easier still when you store these servers as 'favourites' in your server browser. If you don't have one installed on your system, you need one. So read on.

### A BROWSE A DAY

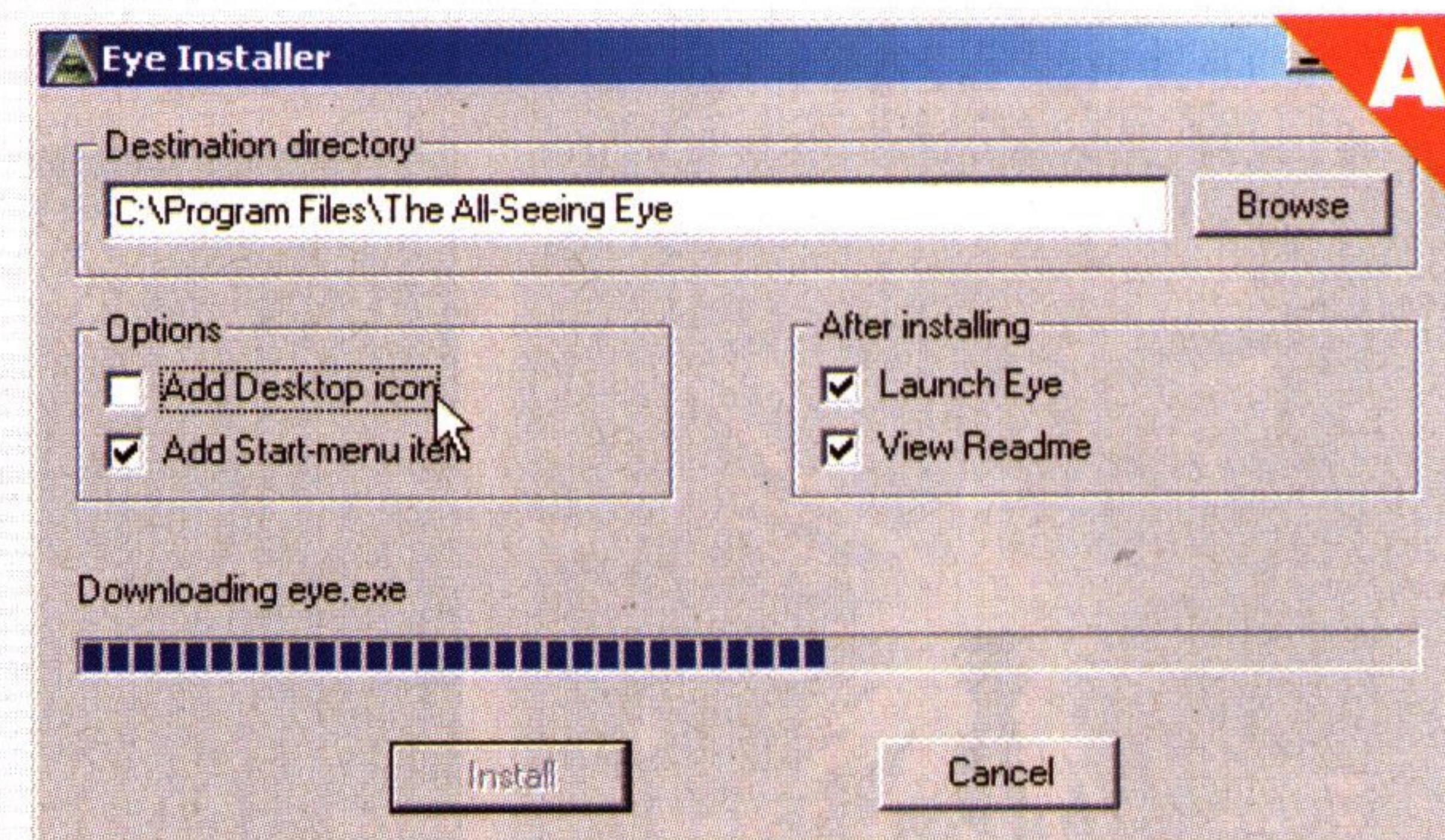
There was a time when choosing a server browser – a desktop utility that helps organise online gaming servers – meant choosing between industry heavyweight GameSpy 3D and PingTool. Today, the choice is easy: you need The All-Seeing Eye. We were among the first

to recommend it, and firmly believe that it now does everything so well there's no point using anything else.

In this next section, we'll install Eye, configure it, and add the ZONE servers to a favourite folder. That way, you'll never be more than three clicks away from your preferred online venues.

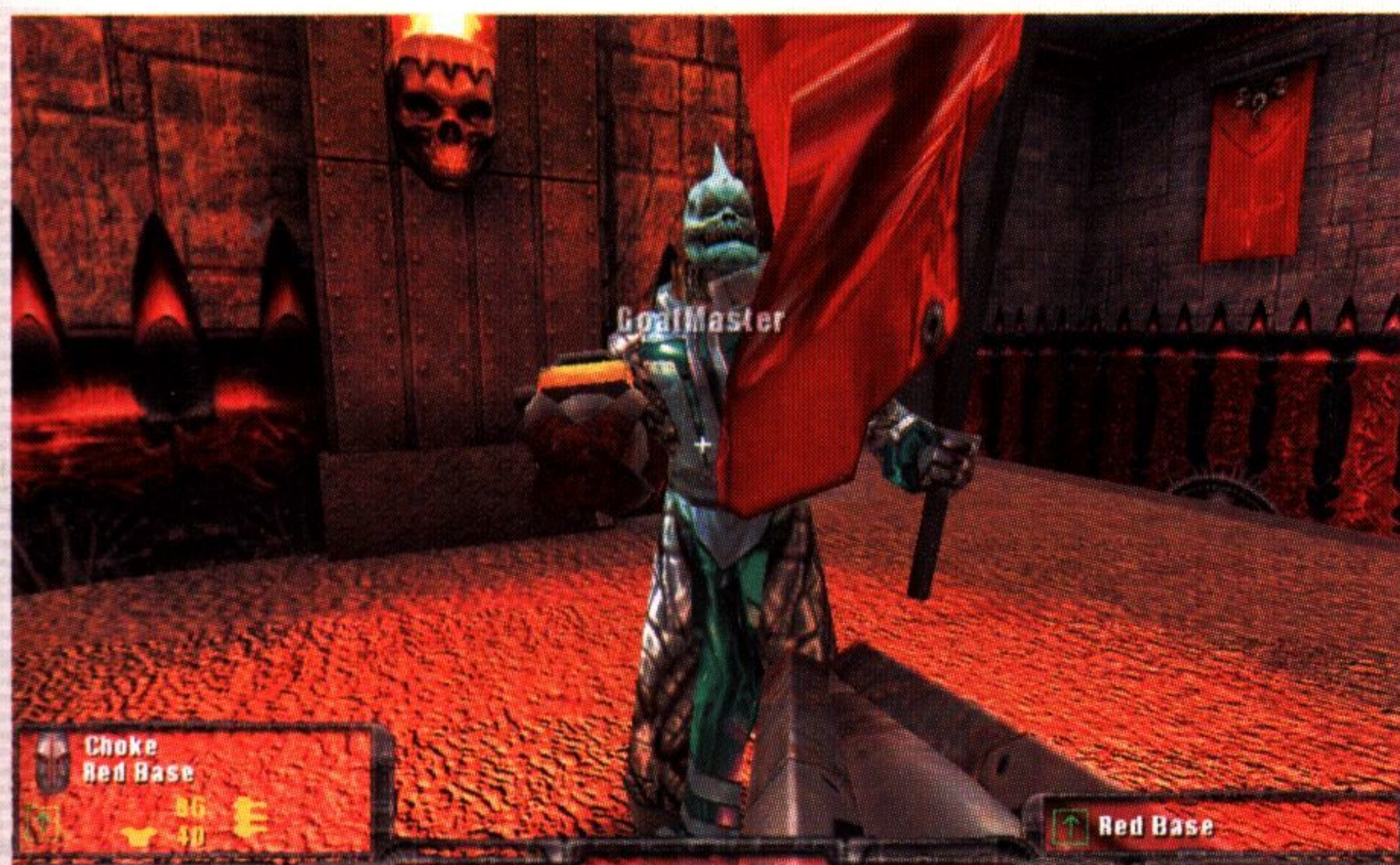
### 1 DOWNLOAD

Browse to [udpsoft.com/eye](http://udpsoft.com/eye) and get Eye's installer. Making sure your Internet connection remains open, double-click to open it (see pic marked A).



Eye's installer stub downloads everything you need.





GoatMaster didn't like being called 'minger'. Didn't like it at all.



Ford's plant at Dagenham proved to be an excellent deathmatch arena.

■ **Tip:** You may see messages regarding the integrity of the data files. We've found that, when run from Windows 95, 98, ME or XP, Eye's installation is trouble-free, but when NT or 2000 are involved you'll read spurious errors telling you that you're 'crazy' to continue. Press OK to clear the error, which in most cases is just plain wrong.

## 2 INSTALL

Once the files have arrived you're all set to unpack them. Select a folder to which Eye

should be installed, and decide whether you want the program to create icons on the desktop and in the Start Menu. Press the Install button to proceed (see B).

■ **Tip:** The Quick Launch Bar has been available since Windows 98 and removes the need to have icons on your desktop. Your screen should be free of all clutter with only a few essentials close at hand – namely the My Computer, Network Neighbourhood and Recycle Bin icons. Remember, a tidy desktop is the sign of a large winky.

## 3 CONFIGURE

Once installed and run, the Setup Wizard will start (see C). The first stage of the Wizard concerns your connection. By default, Eye assumes you're using a 56K modem, although it's likely you're sitting on something a little more exciting. Our picture shows the settings we use for ADSL with 256Kbps upstream and 512Kbps downstream.

■ **Tip:** Unless you share your connection with other PCs, or have background services running (eg file sharing agents such as Audiogalaxy), we suggest nudging bandwidth utilisation to 90 per cent and dropping number of times to ping a server to 2 (see D).

The second stage of the Wizard controls the games you use. By highlighting *Return To Castle Wolfenstein* and selecting the visible in filter list checkbox, Eye will contact every RTCW server and display the results. You can select as many games as you like, and can always come back to this screen to add more when you install them.



**Network**

Connection type

- ☐ 28.8 Modem
- ☐ 57.6 Modem
- ☐ 56K ISDN
- ☐ 64K ISDN
- ☐ 112K ISDN
- ☐ 128K ISDN
- ☐ Faster

Advanced connection settings

Upstream bandwidth (bits/s) 256000

Downstream bandwidth (bits/s) 512000

Packet header overhead (bytes) 40

Limit packets per second to 360

Bandwidth utilization when pinging (%) 90

Number of times to ping a server 2

Timeout when pinging servers (ms) 350

Enable smart ping ☒

Ignore ICMP messages ☐

Number of times to retry scans 2

Timeout when scanning servers (ms) 500

Auto-detect connection settings

The bandwidth auto-detection is not perfect, it might not correctly detect the available bandwidth especially on a shared internet connection. If you think that the reported pings are inaccurate, come back to this page (options/network) and gradually reduce "packets per second" (all the way down to 30 if necessary).

< Back Next > Finish Cancel Help

Press Auto-Detect to have Eye configure your network settings. If you have the balls, we recommend tweaking them yourself.

**Games**

Installed games

- ☒ Half-Life
- ☐ Not Installed
- ☐ Aliens vs. Predator 2
- ☐ Aliens vs. Predator 2 demo
- ☐ Baldur's Gate
- ☐ Baldur's Gate 2
- ☐ Baldur's Gate 2: Throne of Bhaal
- ☐ Battlezone II
- ☐ Blood 2
- ☐ Codename Eagle
- ☐ Codename: Outbreak
- ☐ Counter-Strike retail
- ☐ Daikatana
- ☐ Deer Hunter 3
- ☐ Deer Hunter 4
- ☐ Deer Hunter 5
- ☐ Descent 3

☒ Visible in filter list

Player name

People's Front of Judea

Config file

adminpass.cfg

Program location

D:\Games\Half-Life\hl.exe

Browse Auto-Search

☐ Draw player names with game font

Anti-cheat programs

< Back Next > Finish Cancel Help

This particular PC has a copy of *Half-Life* on it and not much else, but remember that covers *Counter-Strike*, *Team Fortress Classic* and countless others.

**Eye Installer**

Destination directory

D:\Games\The All-Seeing Eye

Browse

Options

- ☐ Add Desktop icon
- ☐ Add Start-menu item

After installing

- ☒ Launch Eye
- ☐ View Readme

All files successfully downloaded and verified. Press Install to continue.

Install Cancel

Download complete, and ready to install locally.



## 4 UPDATE

The main screen is where you'll spend most of your time with Eye, watching who's playing, where they're playing and how they're performing. Before all that we need to download the lists. Right-click on the game you wish to update – in the example we're about to scan for *Half-Life* based servers – and click Refresh. With almost 20,000 servers running *Half-Life* games, now is a great time to go and make a brew (see E).

## 5 SORT

You'll see a whole bunch of servers shuffle about in the window on the right. Eye shows the geographic location of each server with a small flag, so there's no excuse for stumbling onto a server in Kazakhstan and wondering why everyone's talking gibberish (see F).

Now for the bit you've been waiting for – adding us to your favourites. First, open up the Favorites folder on the left, right-click on Favourites 1 and select Rename. Type *Counter-Strike* and press Enter. Now locate the four *ZONE Counter-Strike* servers by clicking on the *Counter-Strike* icon in the top left, and drag highlighting their entries on the right. With the names still selected, right-click on any one and select Add to favourites, *Counter-Strike*. Do the same for all other *ZONE* servers: *Team Fortress Classic*, *Quake III: Arena*, *Unreal Tournament*, and *Return To Castle Wolfenstein*.

■ **Tip:** Click the name column header, and then the location column header, to sort the servers alphabetically by geographic location. Neat or what?

## 6 JOIN IN

Next time you start Eye, open up the Favorites folder and press F5 to update their details. Check who's playing by looking in the lower middle pane, and then double-click the server entry above to join in. It's as simple as that.

■ **Tip:** Read the tutorial at [www.udpsft.com/eye/doc.html](http://www.udpsft.com/eye/doc.html), and of course if you end up using the product as much as we do and you want to access all the features, you'll need to register. The cost is US\$10 per year, or US\$30 for a lifetime license.

## IN THE ZONE

Without exception, everyone is welcome on the *ZONE* servers – yes,



Annoyed at the 75p admission charge, Frank shot the attendant in the head.



Shooters don't come bigger than *Counter-Strike*.

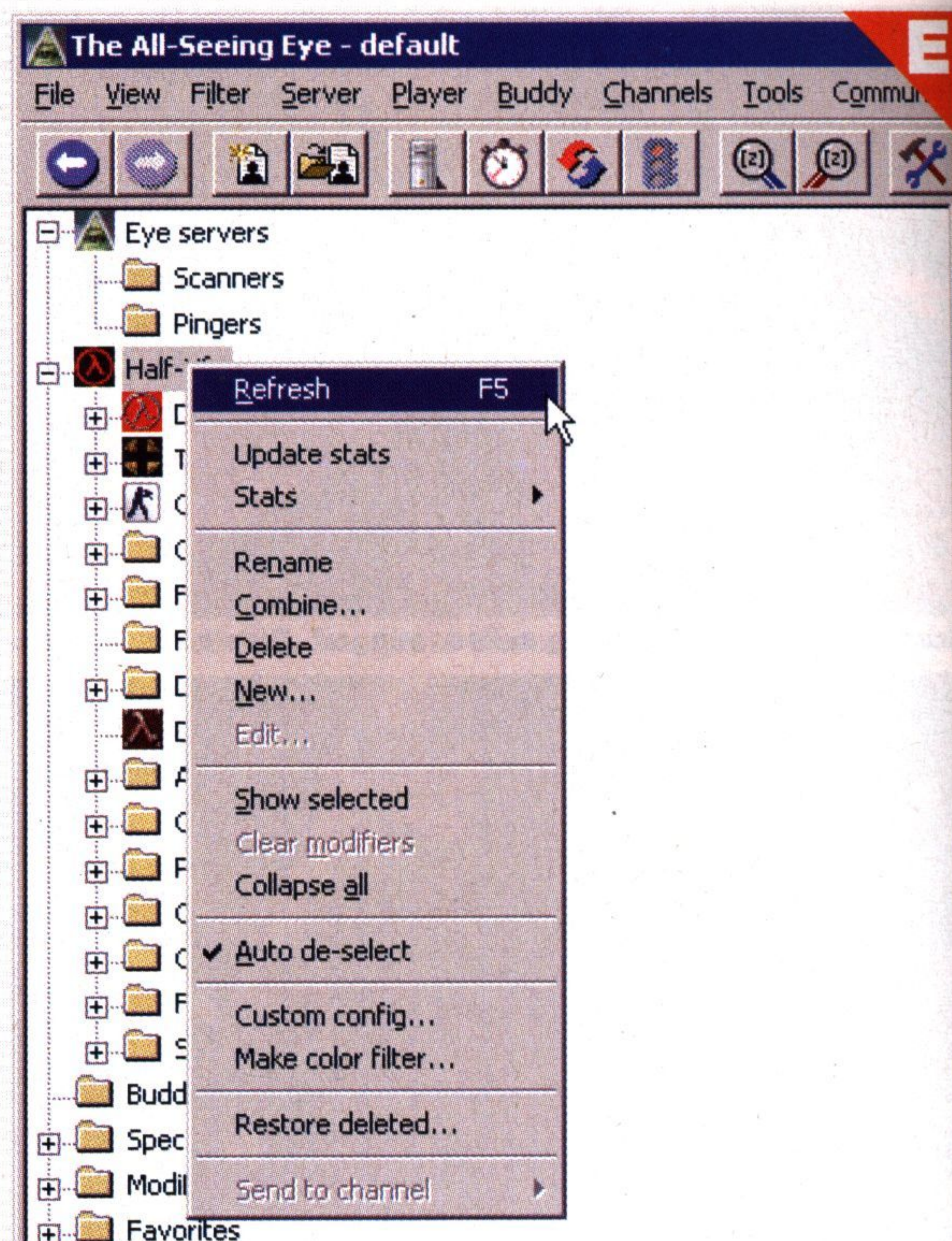
even readers of other games magazines – as long as they follow the rules. First and foremost, don't disrupt games. There are other people playing besides yourself, and if you spoil things you'll find yourself being kicked off. Secondly, be polite. It's natural that a few cuss words will crop up every now and then, but do try to remember it's only a game. Don't get annoyed. Don't throw insults around, and finally, don't cheat. We don't like it.

To help you get the most from your servers, we've set up a couple of channels on IRC. You're free to join either of these two channels, whether you want to chat, get advice from fellow readers, or seek help from server admins (for example, if someone is trying to wreck your game). Server admins are there to help you – they're only too happy to step in and remove trouble-makers, so don't be afraid to ask.

## GETTING ON IRC

To join the *PC ZONE* channels on IRC, you need what's known as an IRC client, and like many people we heartily recommend using mIRC from [www.mirc.co.uk](http://www.mirc.co.uk). Download the installer, select QuakeNet from the IRC Network list, and press Connect. To join our server channel, type `/join #zonegames` and press Enter. To join our chatter channel, type `/join #pcz` and press Enter. A list of people in the room will appear in a list on the right. To talk to the room, type what you want to say and press the Enter key – remember that if you use the slash (/) before typing, mIRC assumes you're using a command rather than actually saying something. [PCZ]

■ For more information on using mIRC see [www.mirc.co.uk/irc.html](http://www.mirc.co.uk/irc.html). To find out more about QuakeNet, the gamer's IRC network, see [www.quakenet.org](http://www.quakenet.org).



Updating game servers for games in The All-Seeing Eye's main screen. This can take a while.



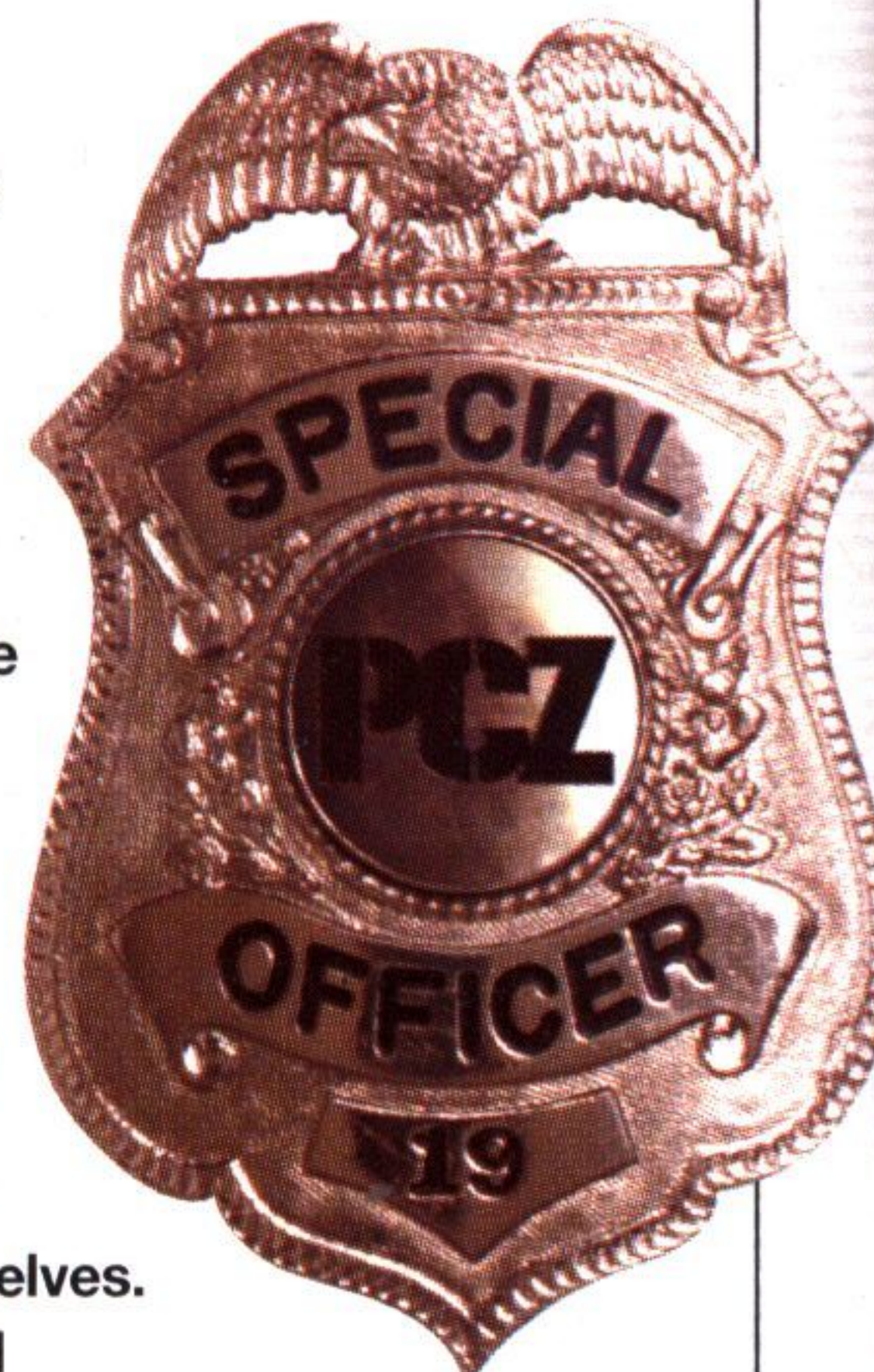
The main window shows all the servers, who's playing on them, and how they are doing.

## JOIN THE ZONE POLICE!

## MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU

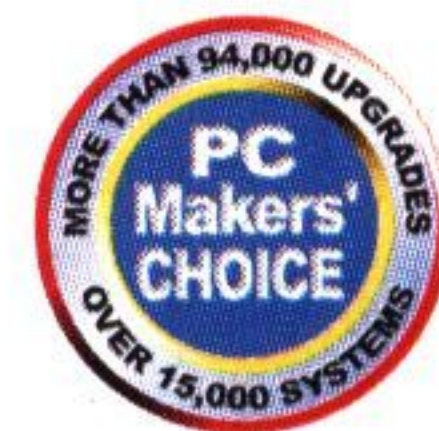
With the arrival of new servers and new games, we need a few responsible people to help administer them. That means making sure eager gamers don't step out of line, getting rid of the troublemakers and reporting regularly back to the Head Admins.

If you think you're up to the job, write to us at [admins@zonegames.co.uk](mailto:admins@zonegames.co.uk) stating your full name, age, and which game you're interested in. We'll let you know within a week whether you've been accepted for the post. You'll need to have IRC access most evenings and put in a regular appearance both in the IRC channels and on the servers themselves. Admin posts are strictly limited, and will be filled on a first-come-first-served basis. The decision of the Head Admins is final. Good luck.



Join the *ZONE* Police! It's great! You even get a gun!



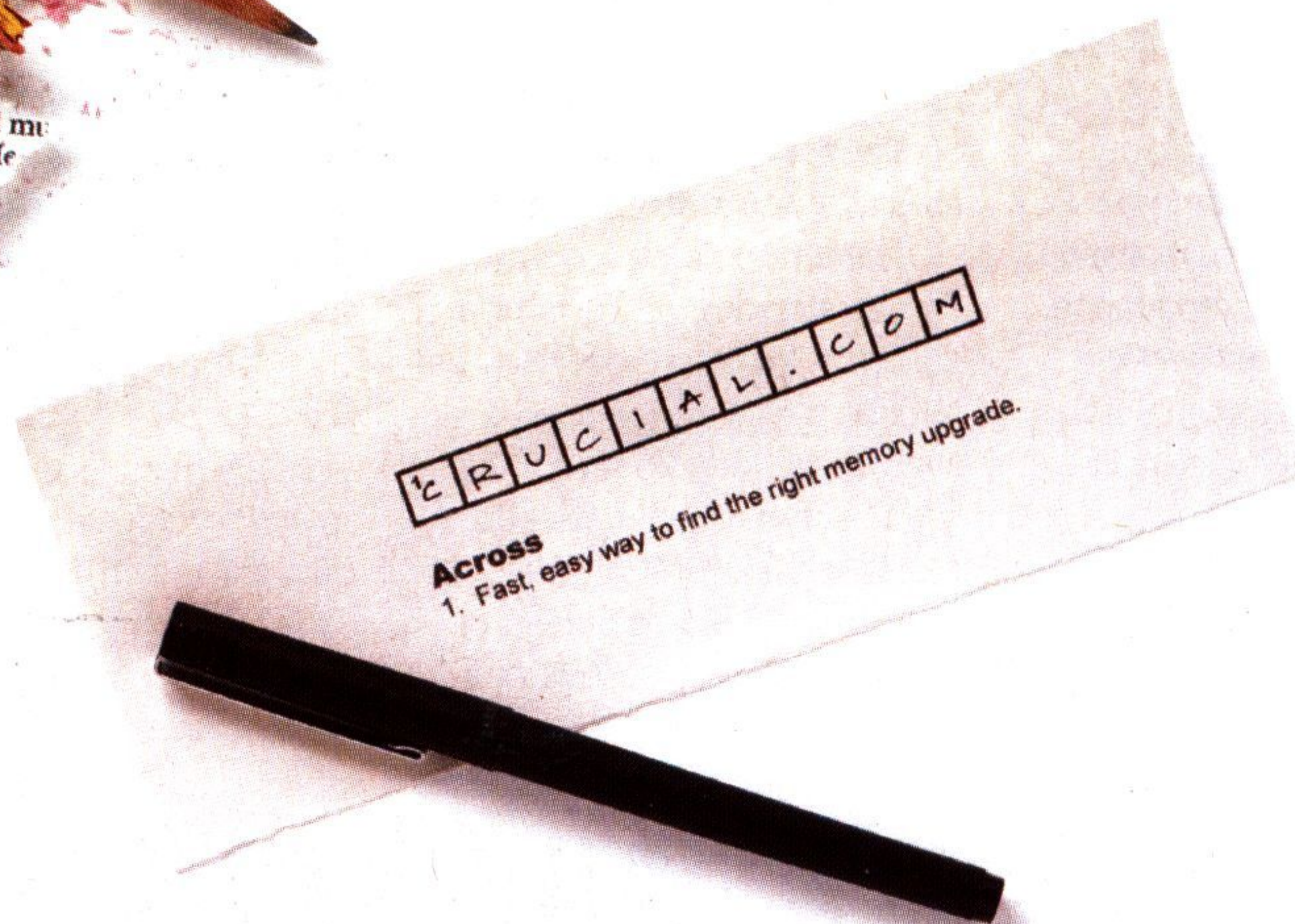


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# THE MODSQUAD

Tony Lamb sits down to chew on some premium mod pie

## TACTICAL OPS v3.1.5

### ASSAULT ON TERROR

ON THE  
CD  
DVD

www.tactical-ops.to

SIZE 210Mb **REQUIRES** Full version of *Unreal Tournament*, patched to version 436



Tactical Ops environments are some of the best around.



Player models and animations are first-rate.

**AFTER** battling it out in the realism stakes with fellow *UT* mod *Strike Force* before adopting a slightly less realistic, but more action-packed stance, the graduation of *Tactical Ops* from freebie mod to commercial release certainly reflects its sheer quality. This latest patch – the 3.1.5 full release – puts the free mod on a par with the retail version of *Assault On Terror*, and the inclusion of the texture patch

means that owners of both versions are now able to meet (and kill each other) online.

The terrorists versus Special Forces storyline will be familiar to *Counter-Strike* fans everywhere, and the range of weapons is similar too, with old favourites like the Desert Eagle, Beretta, Mossberg, H&K MP5, AK47, Steyr and PSG-1 all putting in an appearance. Coupled with the easy set-up and weapons

purchase screens this makes for a very easy-to-get-into mod, and the inclusion of a desktop start-up means no poncing around selecting the mod via *UT* either.

Comparisons with *Counter-Strike* are inevitable as the hostage rescue and bomb-planting/defusing scenarios are so well known, but here *TO* goes one step further by giving map designers more leeway in terms of storylines and objectives too.

With the fantastic *UT* engine behind it and top-class player models and maps, many players may well find they prefer *Tactical Ops* to the so-called 'brand leader'. This might be sacrilege to some, but with *Half-Life*-based games like *CS* so much the target of cheats, *Tactical Ops* makes an incredibly refreshing change. Plus the fact that you can play against bots is just another attraction, enabling

you to finely hone your skills and familiarise yourself with maps without running up a monster phone bill.

All in all, *Tactical Ops* is a superb mod, and although we've looked at it before, this latest version is a tour de force.

**PCZONE  
VERDICT**

**92**

Fan-bloody-tastic

## GLOBAL WARFARE BETA v1.2

ON THE  
CD  
DVD

www.planethalflife.com/globalwarfare

SIZE 65Mb **REQUIRES** Requires full version of *Half-Life*

**AN** upcoming *Counter-Strike* alternative, *Global Warfare* is a blend of *TFC*-style class-based mod, mixed with the mission play of *Counter-Strike*. There are two teams – terrorists and UN forces – and once each soldier has chosen his speciality (infantry, medic, engineer, sniper and so on) he will be ferried into

action by either a helicopter or APC (depending on level). If you die, you just wait for the transport to come and get you again. Interestingly, each team has a rocket launcher, which can be picked up from the base and allows the player to destroy the enemy transport, leaving any re-spawning opponents kicking

their heels back at camp. This is a neat trick, although the weapon is cumbersome.

Also very neat is the in-game map, which makes map familiarisation very easy – if a tad unrealistic. The classes are nicely balanced, with a good variety of weaponry available when you first make your

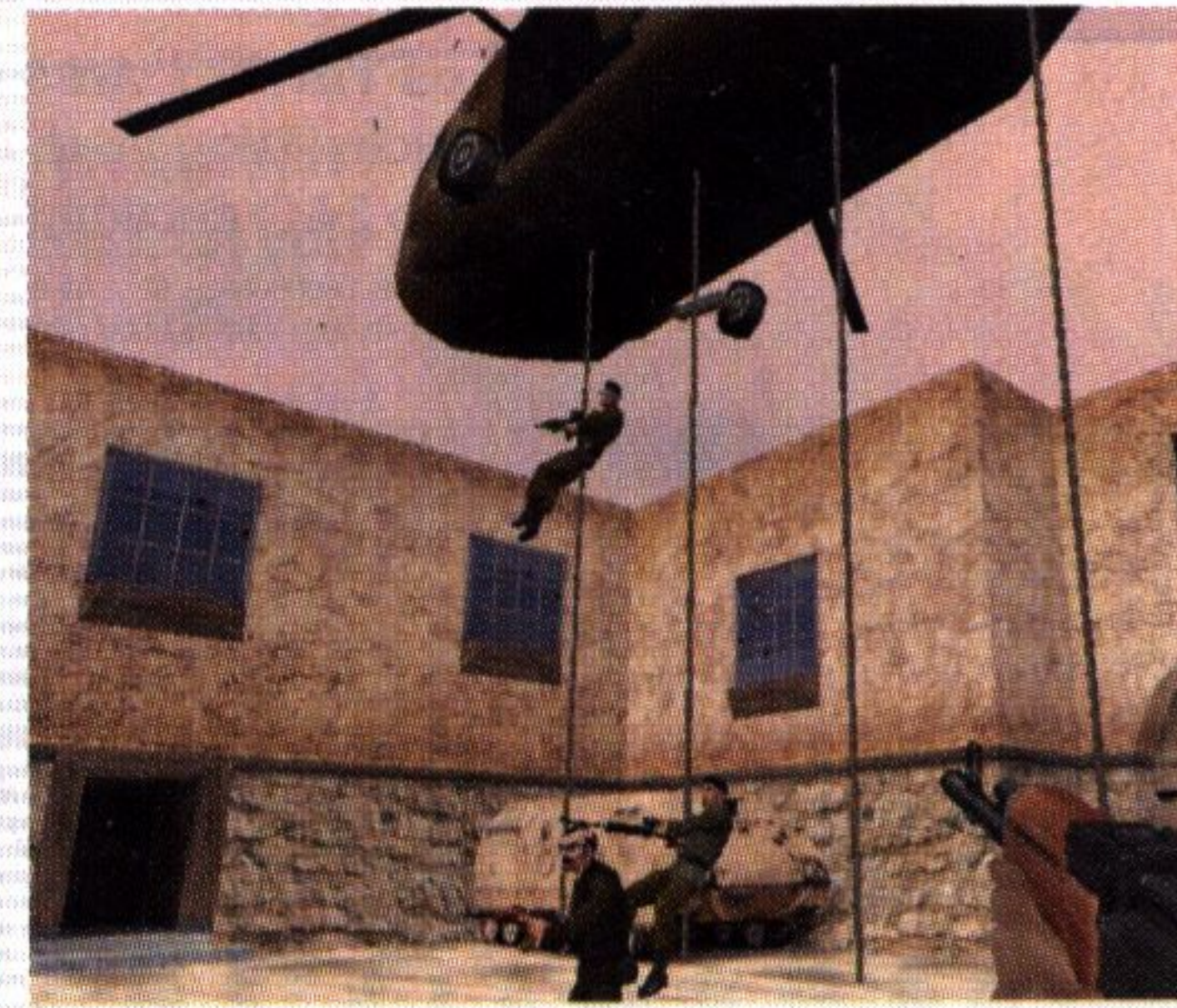
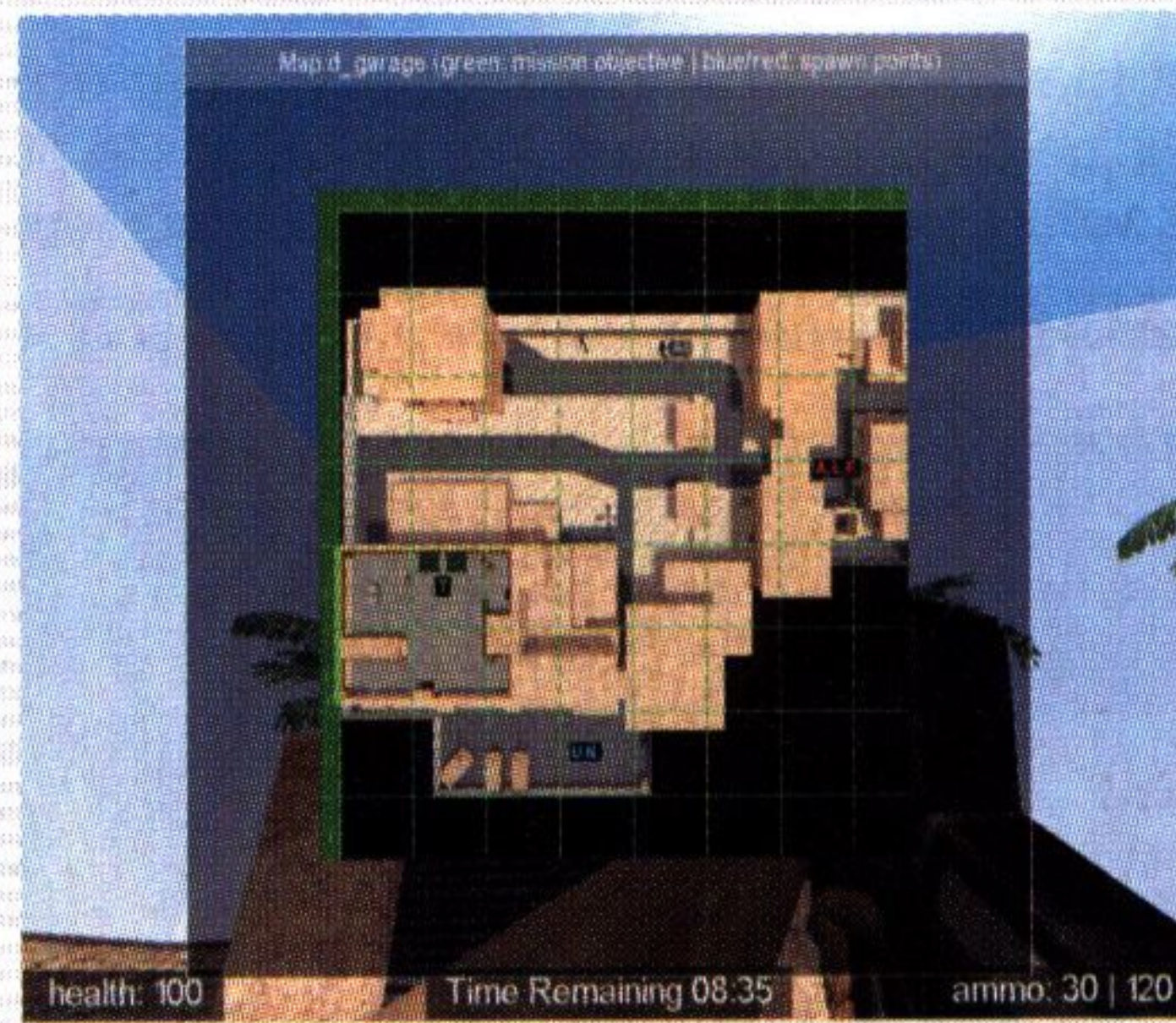
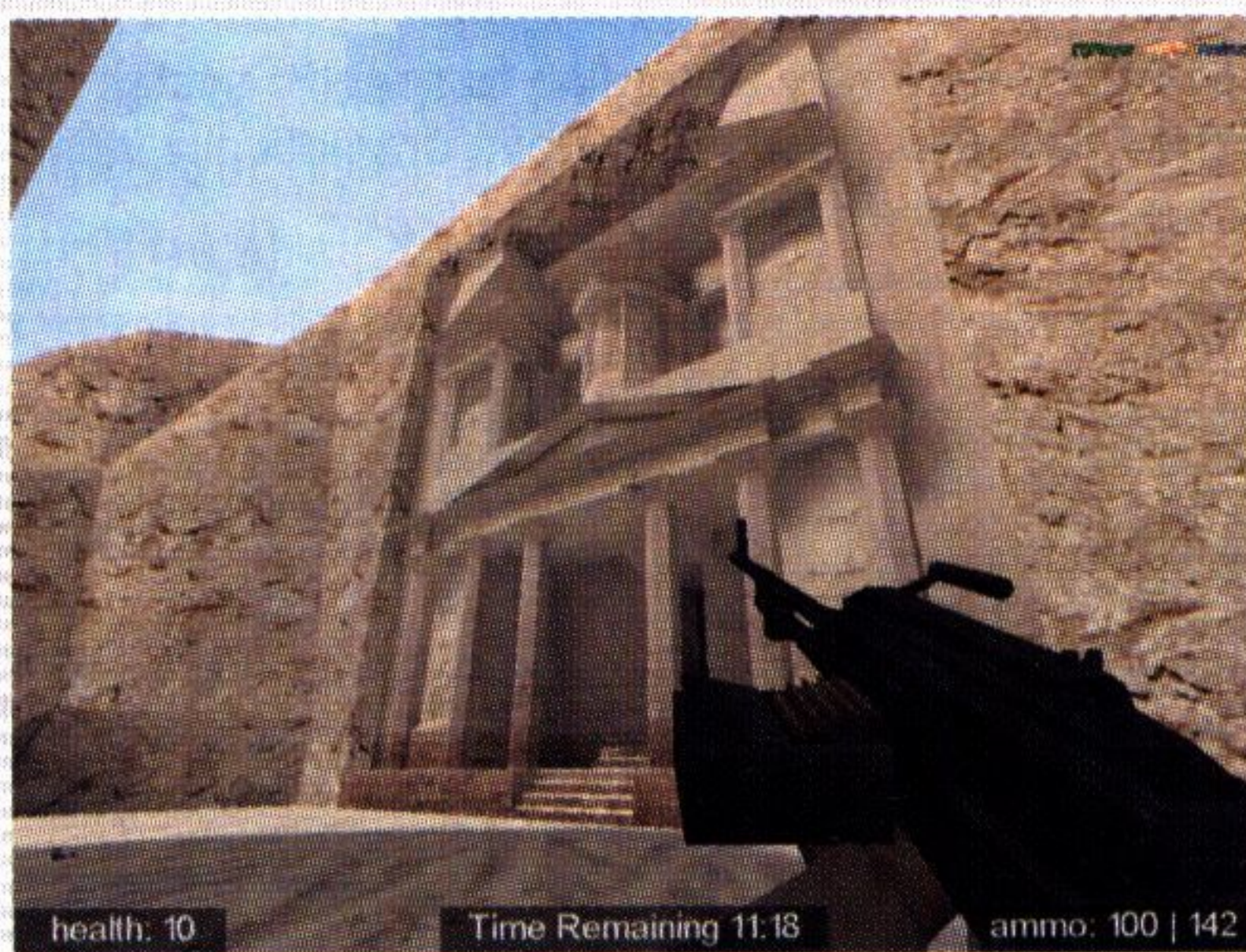
selection, and even the more lowly classes can pack an impressive punch. The levels are generally impressive, with some great custom textures and touches. Overall, *Global Warfare* is a very enjoyable mod, if a bit rough around some edges. If you're fed up with spending most of your *Counter-Strike* 'life'

as a spectator, then *GW* is quite possibly the mod for you. There's even enough online support to make a good game likely too.

**PCZONE  
VERDICT**

**76**

A classy oldie



Well-balanced classes and a decent set of weapons makes *Global Warfare* a contender.

Petra map is so realistic you might wish you weren't there.





Bad guys don't last long against the Red Diamond Group.



The Chinook takes you into battle against the SAS.

# RED DIAMOND GROUP: OPERATION SULKING VIPER

ON THE  
DVD

■ [www.planetrainbowsix.com/dtd](http://www.planetrainbowsix.com/dtd)

SIZE 49Mb **REQUIRES** Full version of *Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear – Urban Operations*

**WITH** *Operation Sulking Viper*, the DTD mod team has another winner following their *SWAT* and *US TAC* mods moving swiftly into the must-have folder for any *Urban Operations* fan. This is an all-inclusive add-on and great fun too.

Red Diamond Group is a privately funded organisation whose operatives travel the world, locating and eradicating terrorists. Their solution is 'peace through violence', and their methods extreme. This fits perfectly into the *Rainbow Six*

game environment, and the DTD additions work so well that they can proudly stand side by side with the Red Storm originals.

Attention to detail is key here, and not only are the new uniforms good-looking, but the weapons are almost real

enough to touch. The intelligence reports, briefings and gameplay all fit seamlessly together too. The custom missions are bang up to date (including one to defuse explosive devices planted in the World Cup stadium near Seoul) and you

can even go up against the SAS in a purpose-designed skirmish map – if you're man enough.

**PCZONE  
VERDICT**

**75**

**Lovely stuff**



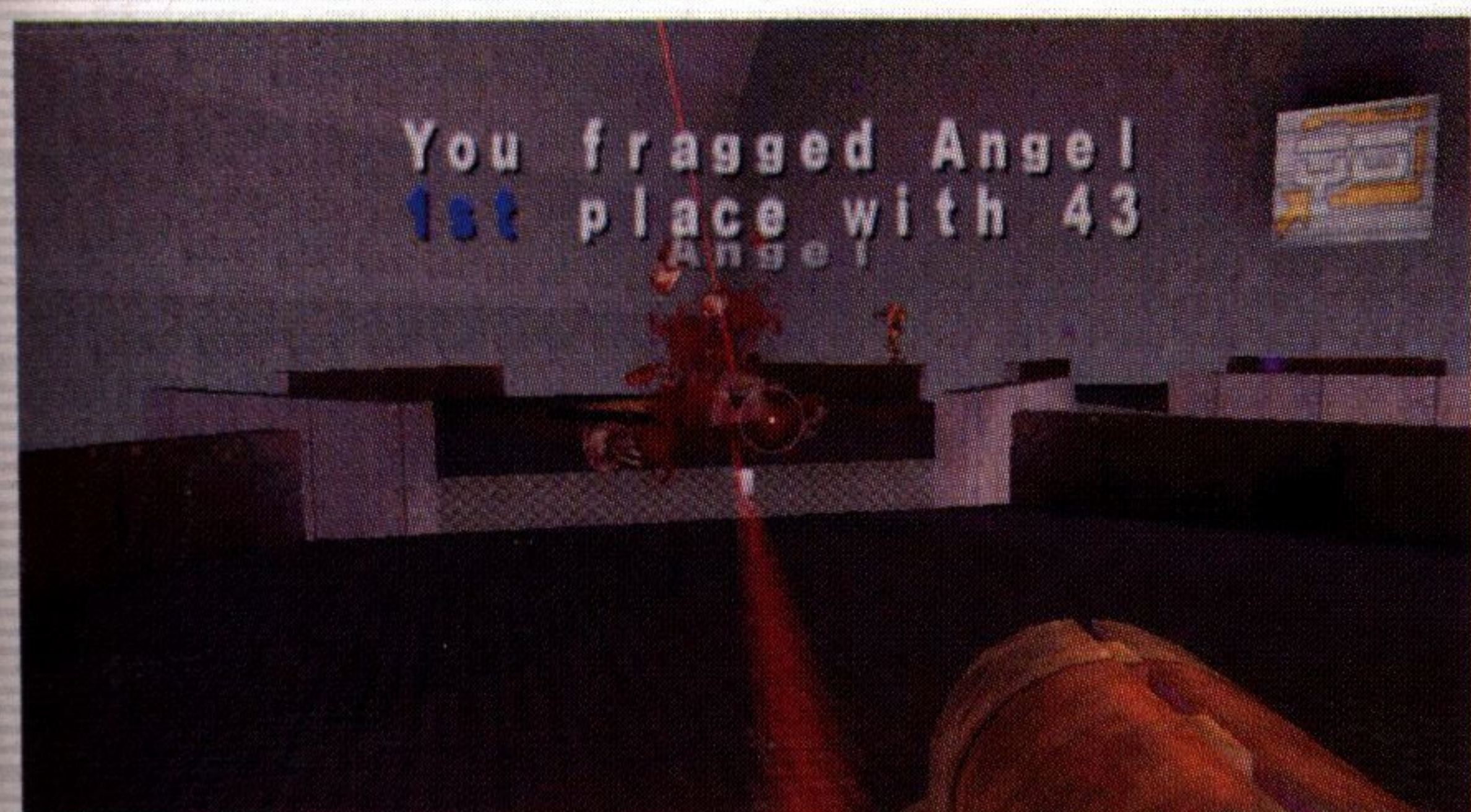
Young man, there's a place you can go.

# QUICKDEATH v2.0

ON THE  
CD  
DVD

■ [www.planetquake.com/quickdeath](http://www.planetquake.com/quickdeath)

SIZE 12Mb **REQUIRES** Full version of *Quake III*, patched to version 1.31



QuickDeath instagib variant makes for fast action.

**IT MIGHT** be small, but that just goes to prove that good things can come in little packages – a bit like Kylie Minogue on a bucking bronco. And the similarities don't end there. Like the diminutive Aussie poppet, this mod has enough features to keep your heart-rate pounding, but being essentially a variant on the Instagib-via-railgun theme, its lifespan is likely to be limited once you've tried every idea out for size.

Don't let that put you off though, because although the gameplay is familiar, *QuickDeath* still makes for as frantic a game as you can get and will happily work and support bots in any

deathmatch, team deathmatch or CTF environment. Bonus items such as rail shards enable you to enhance your railgun to a faster model, and there is even a possibility to re-skin your weapon if you feel that the one you're carrying isn't butch enough. For the sadists, a new game type – poison death – allows time to savour the agonising death of an opponent. In essence, *QuickDeath* offers relatively little that's new, but it's well worth keeping around for a workout.

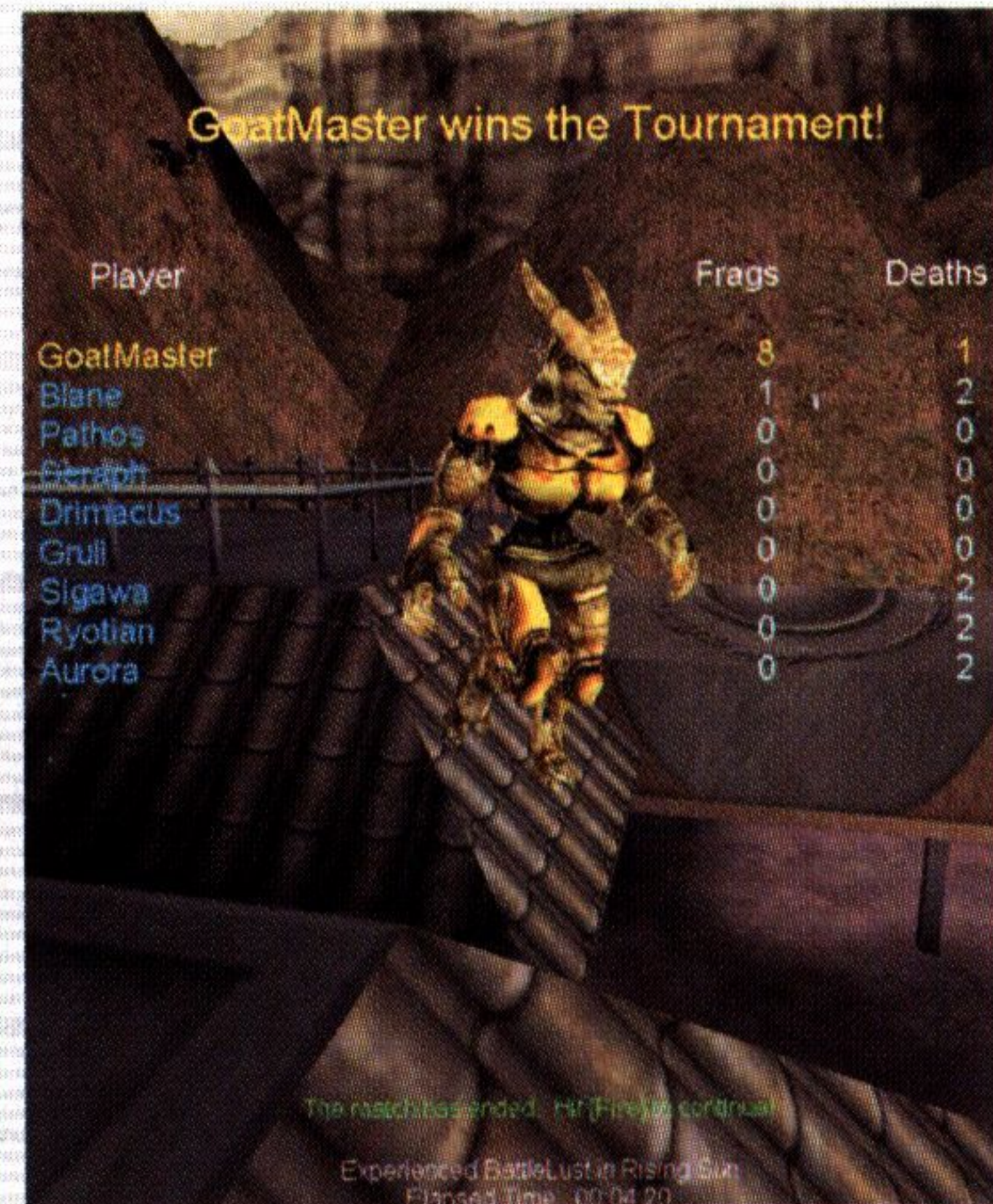
**PCZONE  
VERDICT**

**69**

**Compact fun**



Choose your God carefully. This one's tough but ugly.



Not every fight will be this easy.

# GODZ v107

ON THE  
DVD

■ [www.planetreal.com/godz/](http://www.planetreal.com/godz/)

SIZE 55Mb **REQUIRES** Full version of *Unreal Tournament*, patched to version 436

**GODZ** is a total conversion with new maps, character models, sounds and some unusual gameplay. The premise is that far in the future, an alien race called the Qual have initiated a tournament for superior, enhanced warriors – the Godz – who then fight it out among themselves for supremacy. It's all a bit like watching *Hercules* on Channel 5 on a Saturday morning, but without the babes.

In Godz you won't find any rocket launchers, chainguns or bombs, instead each character generates Qi (energy), and he or she uses this both for focused attacks and to create defensive shields. The weapons can be very effective, and with the Godz' ability to fly they make for distinctly unconventional fights.

Player models are well detailed and the maps are of a very high standard. What might alienate some players is the

third-person viewpoint, which sometimes sends the camera position up your character's own behind, wrecking your chances of winning a fight. Regular FPS fans might run screaming from this, but it is worth persevering with, so give it a whirl.

**PCZONE  
VERDICT**

**73**

**Animé meets Dungeons and Dragons**



# DISC PAGES

■ DISCS Mark Eveleigh

WORDS Rhianna Pratchett, Matt Cheshire and Richie Shoemaker

## HELP!

**CD trouble?** Don't worry – phone our helpline on **08701 711 482**. The line is open weekdays between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm, or email [pc\\_zone@interchange.co.uk](mailto:pc_zone@interchange.co.uk) BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling the helpline:

- If possible, have your PC operating and near the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, soundcard, RAM and so on – plus the nature of the fault.
- Have a pen and paper to hand, so you can jot down the relevant info.

## MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- You need at least a P266 with 32Mb RAM to run the software on the discs. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card.
- Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are 3D accelerator only.

## DISCLAIMER

- This disc has been thoroughly tested at all stages of its production. However, it is always wise to use a virus checker on any software before running it.
- Dennis Publishing Limited cannot accept any responsibility for any loss, disruption or damage to your data or your computer system (including hardware) that may occur while using either the disc or programs and data on it.

# THE SUM OF ALL FEARS

**CD2/DVD Pub: Ubi Soft Reviewed: Issue 118 (64%)**

Based on Tom Clancy's New York bestseller of the same name, *The Sum Of All Fears* is another squad-based shooter in a similar vein to the *Rainbow Six* series, and developed by Red Storm Entertainment. Powered by the *Ghost Recon* engine, it looks and feels fantastic to play, combining elements of the novel and the film to great effect. This demo, which gives you a good idea of the content of the full version offers both single-player and multiplayer modes.

The single-player mission sees you leading an elite special operations team against a gang of militia who have taken control of an abandoned prison. The hostage rescue mission is broken up into four objectives and they can be completed using stealth or brute force.

A combination of pre-selected weaponry is available



The trusty sniper rifle makes an appearance. Some things never change.

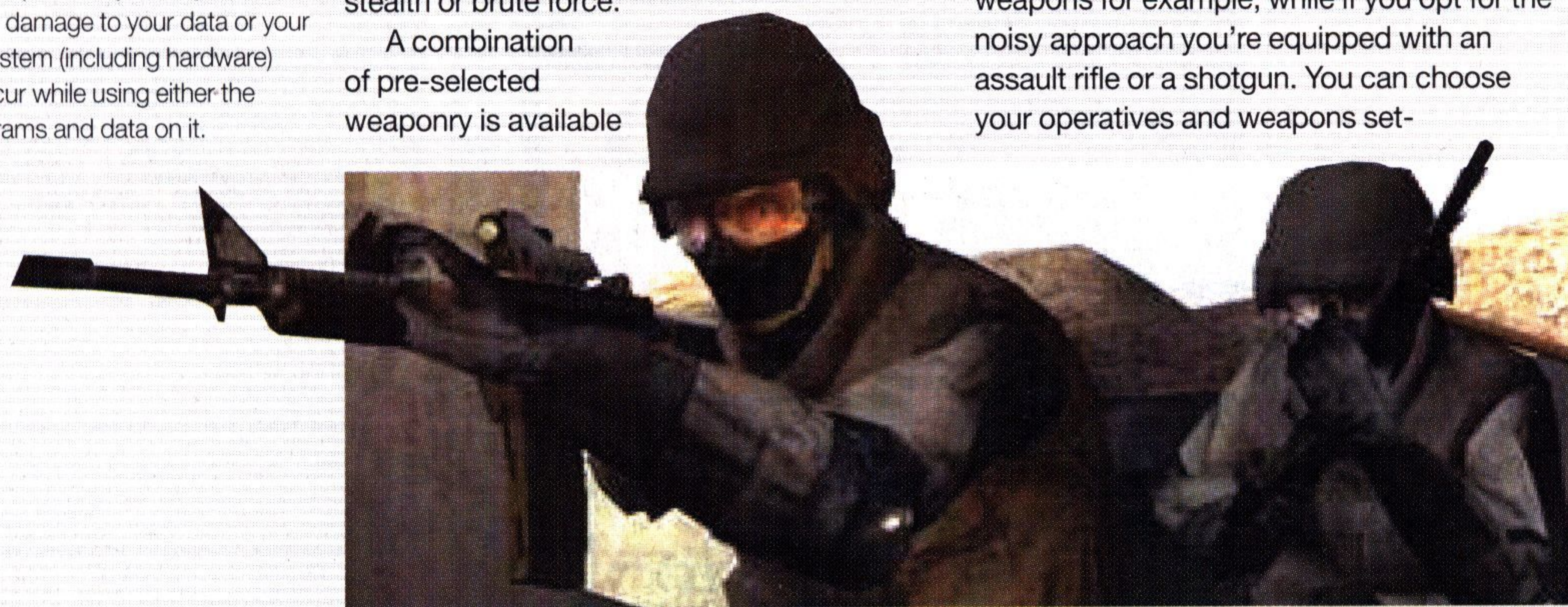


Unsurprisingly, night vision goggles help you see in the dark.

depending on how you want to play. Stealth missions are carried out using silenced weapons for example, while if you opt for the noisy approach you're equipped with an assault rifle or a shotgun. You can choose your operatives and weapons set-

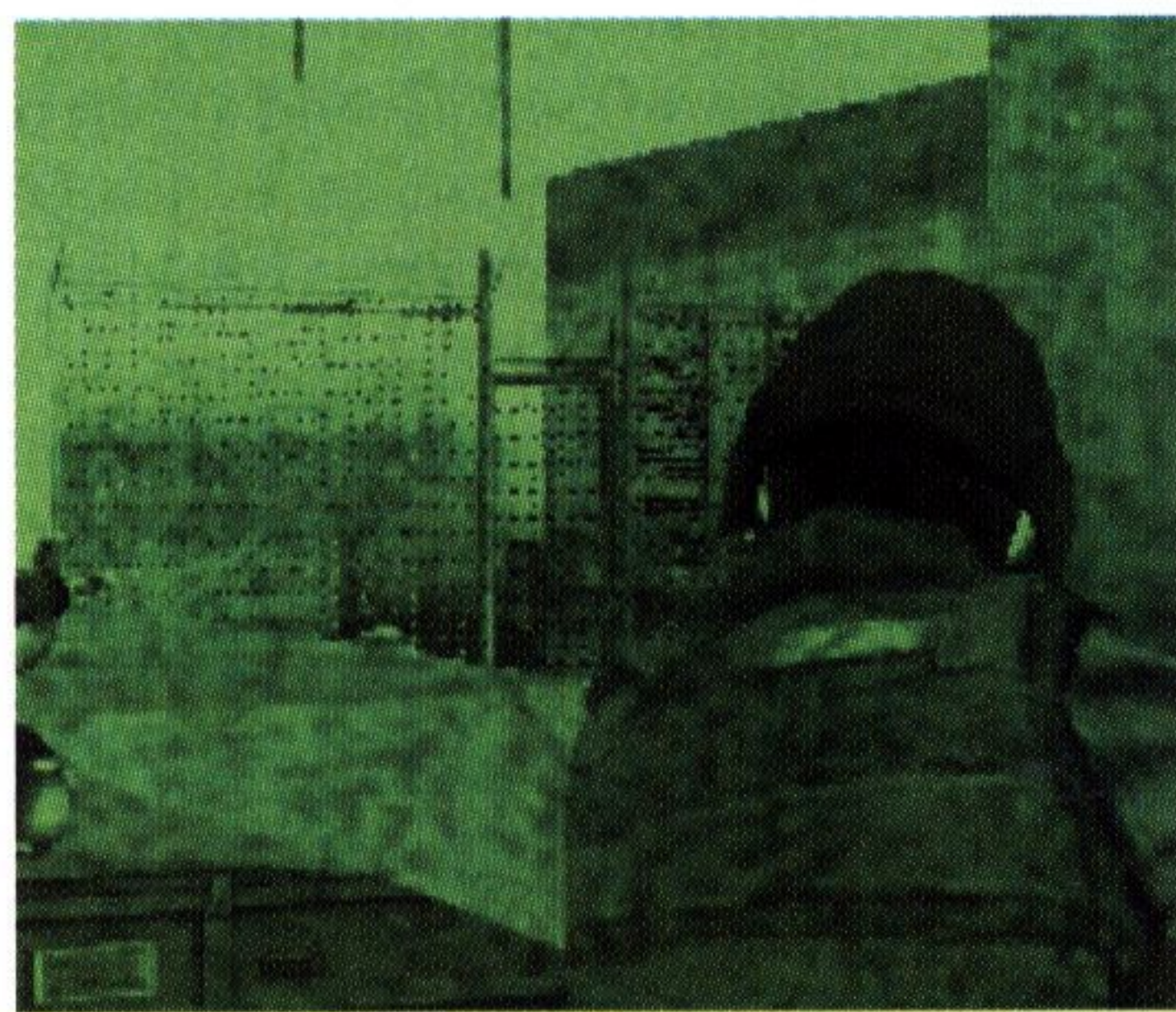
up in the interface screen before the mission starts, and there are two other single-player modes. The first is Firefight, where the aim is purely and simply to eliminate all enemy soldiers before they kill you, and the second is Lone Wolf, which is almost the same but you don't get the benefit of the other squad members – it's just you against a whole prison full of balaclava-wearing bad boys.

Multiplayer is also available, and servers can be found on the Ubi.com service. If you aren't already a member you'll need to sign up to experience this; alternatively you can set up a LAN game and get a few mates to join in. Multiplayer offers co-op, solo, and team-based modes and each mode has a different set of game types, including Last Man Standing and King Of The Hill.



## WALKTHROUGH →

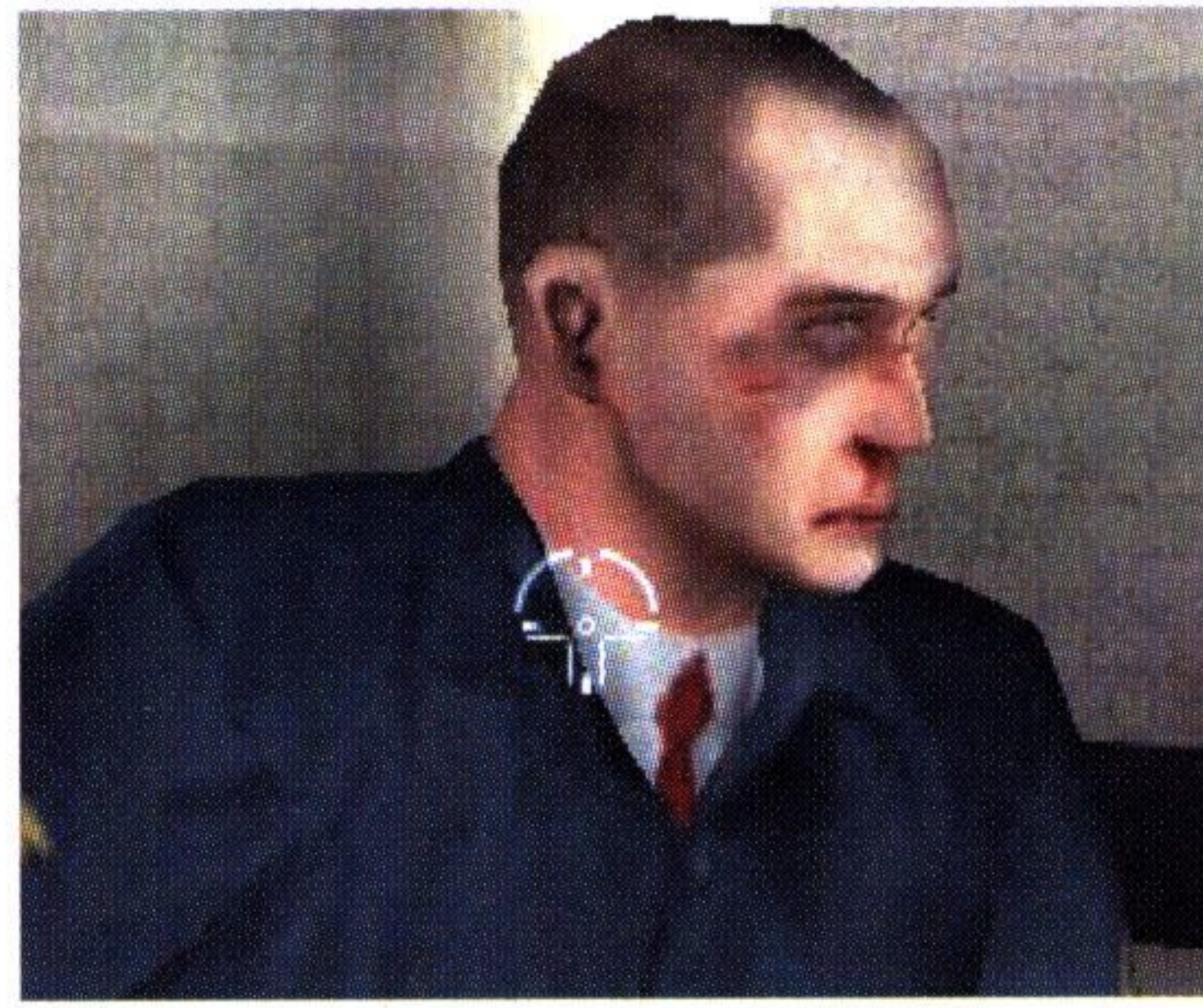
Because nobody said that fighting terrorism was going to be easy...



**1** The first objective is to secure the north-east watchtower. Do this by following the waypoints marked on your map at the bottom of the screen. This map will show the position of enemy forces, so be ready to eliminate every red dot you see.



**2** Now you have to disarm a bomb set by the terrorists, which can be done by following the waypoints up to the office area of the map – killing all opposition on the way of course. Once you've found the bomb, disarm it by holding down the 'use' key.



**3** Once the bomb is disarmed, proceed out of the office area and down the stairs to the cafeteria where you'll find the hostages. Enemy units will fire at you from the far right at the end of the room; take them out before they wipe out your unit and the hostages.



**4** With all the hostages rescued, you should have a clear run to the extraction point. Try and position the FBI agents between you and a team-mate. Make sure you don't let any of the agents die on the way to the extraction point, otherwise you'll fail the mission.



# STAR WARS JEDI OUTCAST

**CD2/DVD Pub:** LucasArts **Reviewed:** Issue 115 (91%)

The demo of the best *Star Wars* game in half a decade is finally with us, and it offers an entirely new level not in the retail version. And an entertaining one it is too, offering four weapons – one of which is of course your trusty lightsaber – and five Force powers to unleash on dozens of Stormtroopers.

Kyle Katarn and his trusty sidekick are sent to investigate an old Remnant base, but it isn't long before things take a turn for the worse. In this mission you battle to disable the shield generator, make a

daring rescue and even come up against a Dark Jedi Knight.

It's worth taking a look at the game's readme file, which is located in the directory you install the demo to. In it you'll find details on your Force powers and melee combat moves – very useful if you want to get out alive. If things get too hot, you could always cheat: bring down the console by pressing Shift and [ ], then type 'helpusobi 1' to enable cheat mode. Typing 'god' into the console should keep you alive for a while longer.



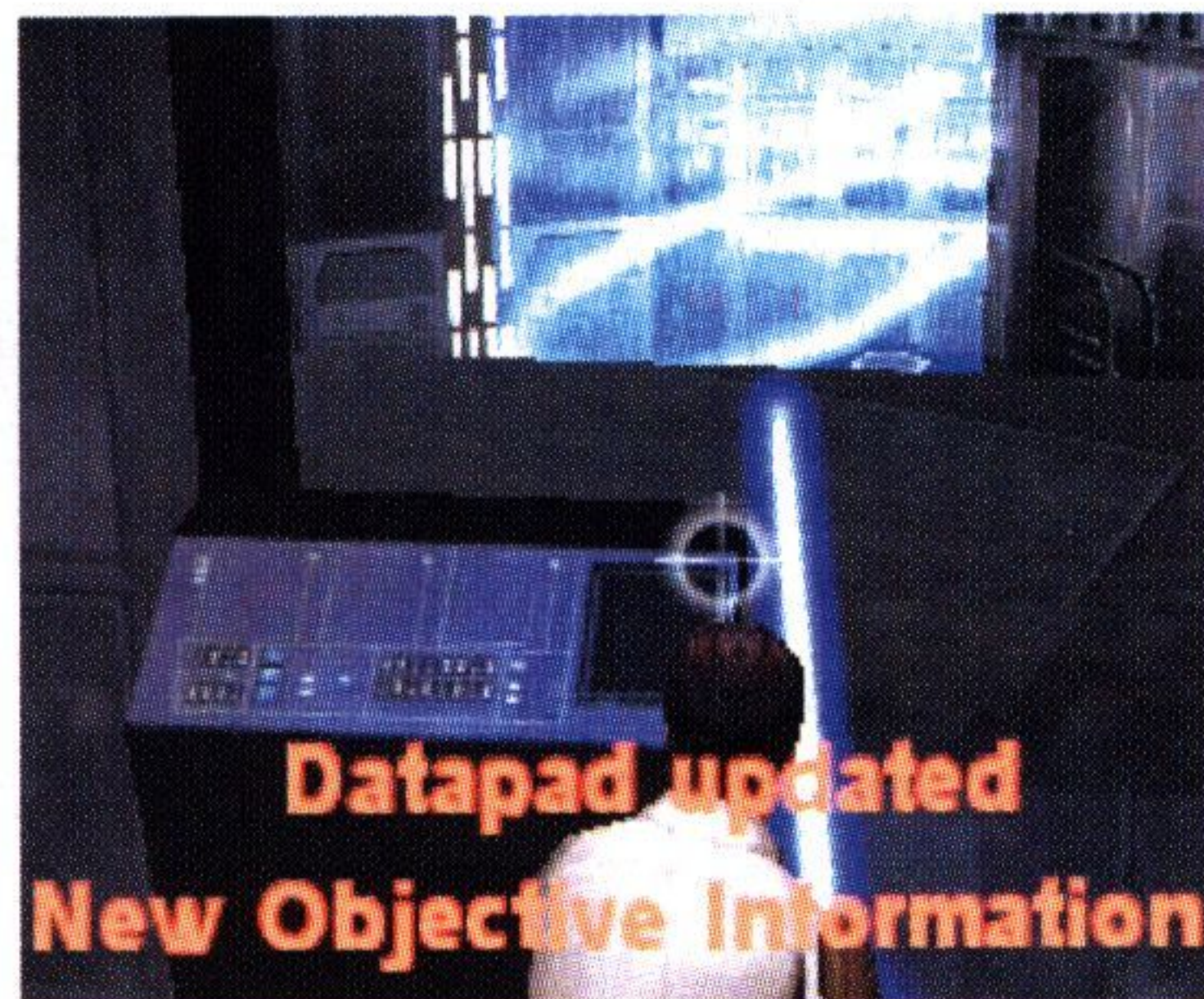
There's nothing more satisfying than lopping off a Trooper's arm.

## WALKTHROUGH →

Use the force to complete the demo. If that doesn't work, try this walkthrough.



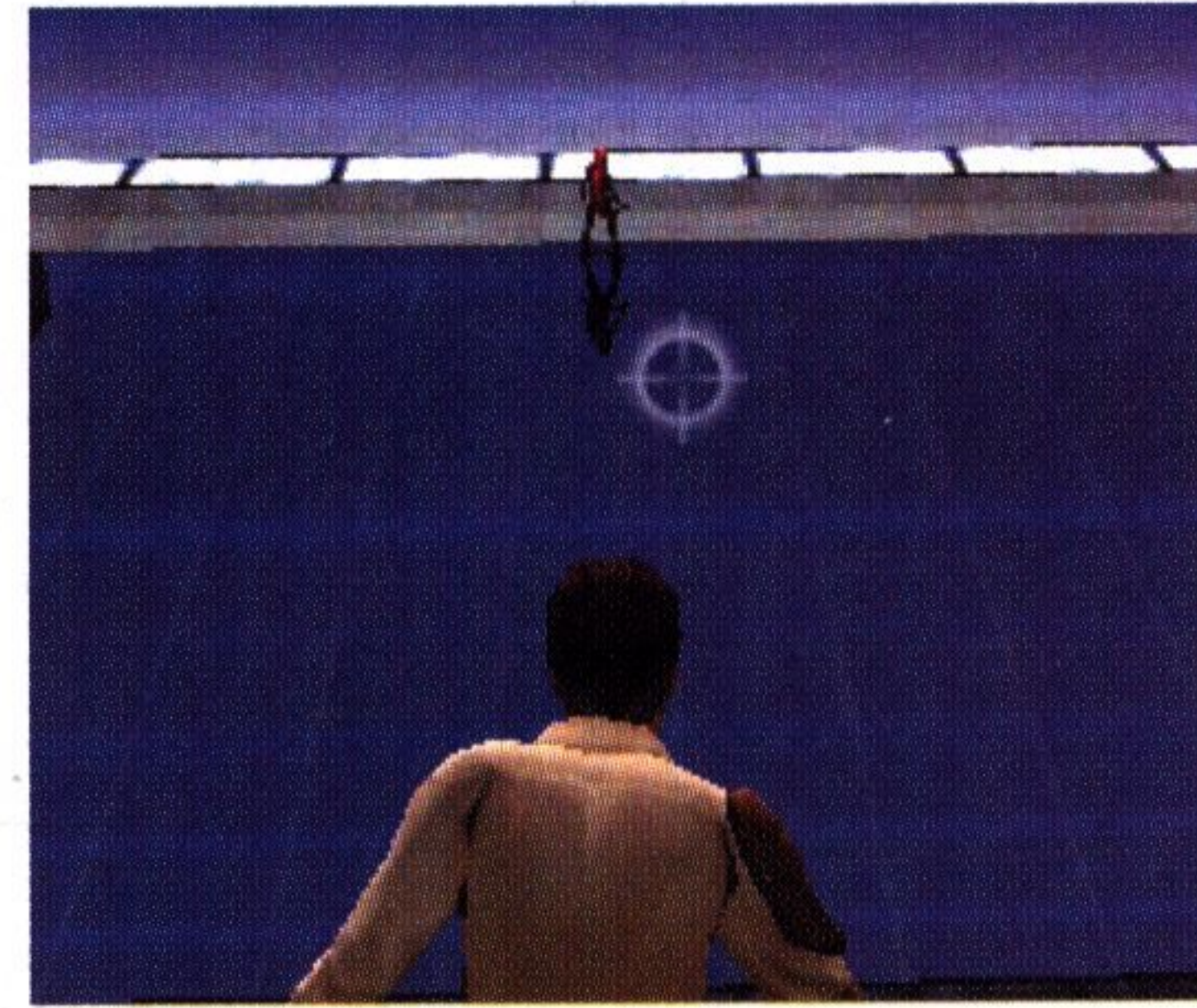
**1** Kill the Commander to get the security key. He's the one in the black '70s polo-neck number.



**2** Hit the panels to disable the shield. Look for the panel with the red light switched on.



**3** Throw your lightsaber at the supports and that will lower the bridge sections.



**4** Use your Heal Force power before you take on the Dark Jedi, or it could be a short fight.

# TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

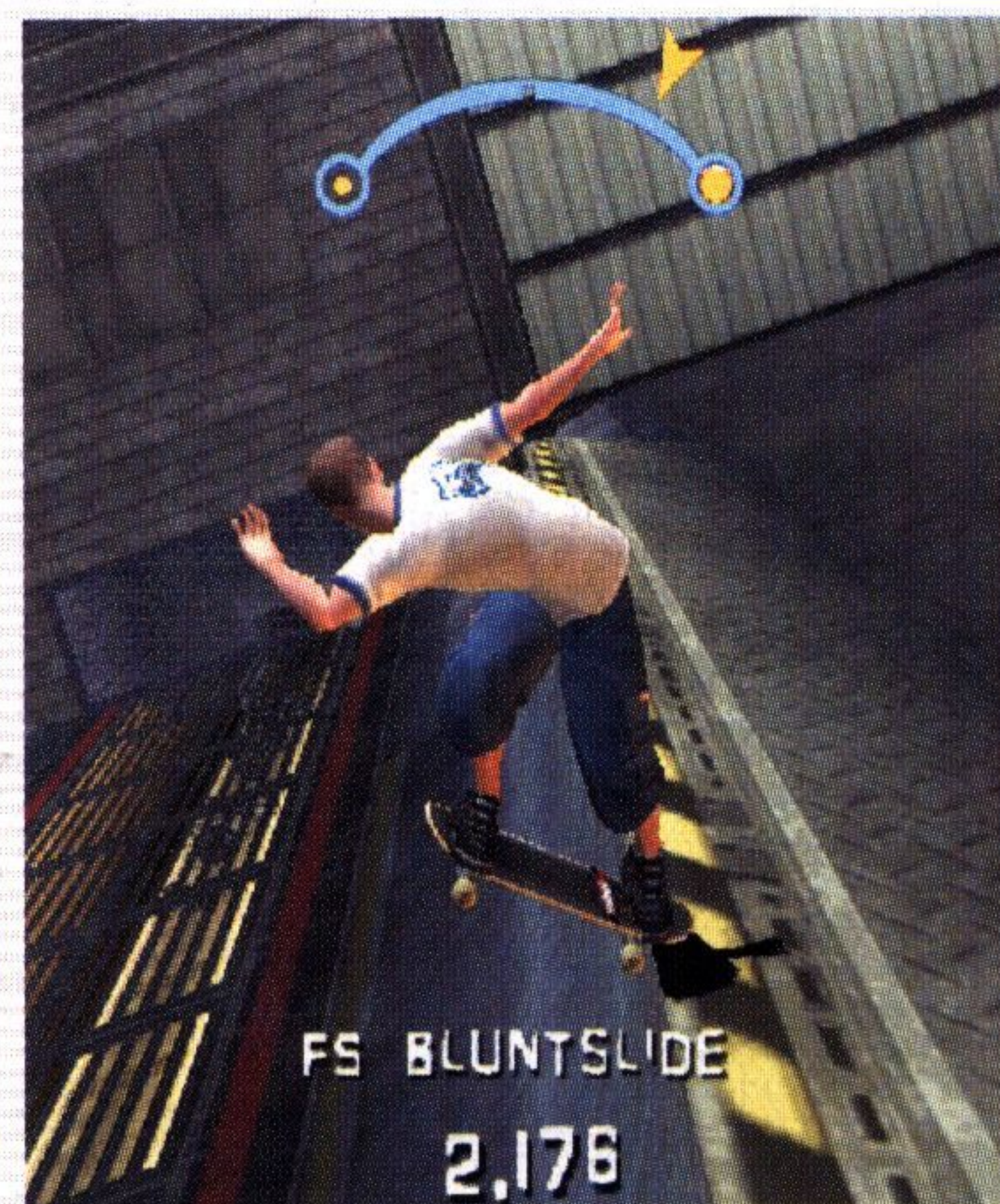
**CD2/DVD Pub:** Activision **Reviewed:** Issue 115 (86%)



Use combos to get yourself the highest score possible.

The *Tony Hawk's* series, endorsed by the god of skateboarding himself (as witnessed in action at the recent E3 show), improves with each new version – and this one is the best yet. The controls have been finely tuned, the tricks are a little more erm... tricky, and owners of *Pro Skater 2* on PC will notice that the graphics are much improved. What we're trying to say is that if you loved the previous version you'll love this one too.

The demo is single-player only, offering a choice of career mode, single session, and free skate. Free skate is a lot of fun, since it lets you practice to your heart's content unhindered by the clock. In contrast, career mode offers up several tricky challenges, such as performing certain tricks in different areas of the skate park, while single session is a free run of the park with two minutes on the clock. Getting a high score isn't

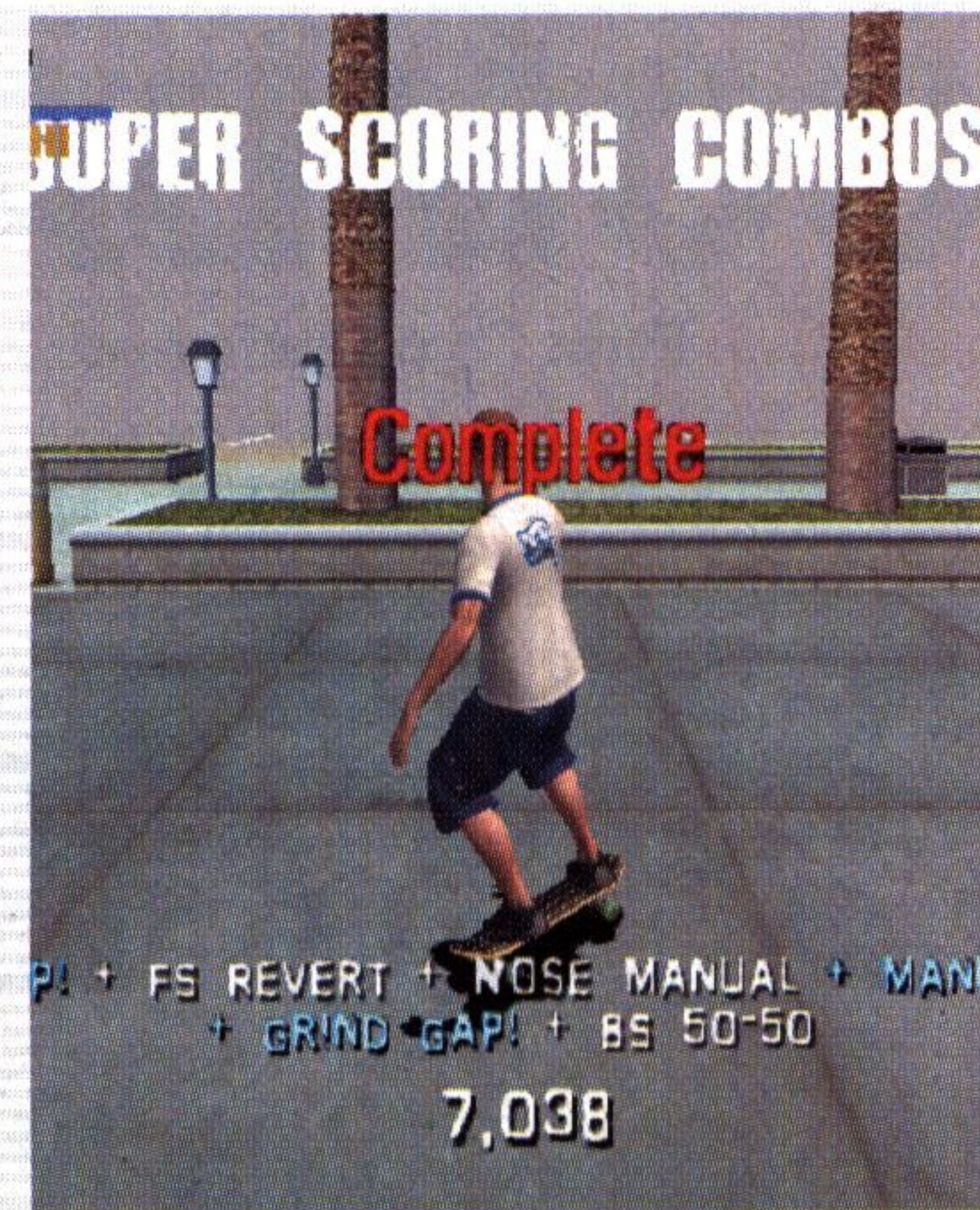


Pull off a lip trick for extra points.

as easy as you may think, so here's a few tips to get you started...

Firstly, using the keyboard is not recommended. If you have a joypad, you're much better off with that. You'll need to configure the pad first in the options screen before the demo loads.

You can combine moves by executing a 'manual' when you land a trick. This is done by pressing up and down just before you land, and means you can achieve a



Newbies should head for the tutorial.

sick score. 'Lip' and 'grind' tricks offer the most points, and when combined with a 'nollie' the points on offer can be doubled.

Another option is to collect 'stat points' to up your statistics, giving you greater height, balance, or speed.

If you haven't got the foggiest what we're on about we suggest heading for the tutorial where you'll be taught the basics of stunting and how to keep your knees free from scabs.





Schumacher and Coulthard collide again. Guess whose fault it was.

# F1 2002

CD2/DVD Pub: EA Sports Reviewed: Issue 117 (84%)

Fans of Formula One racing can relax, safe in the knowledge that another fix of F1 is coming their way, courtesy of EA Sports. That's right, *F1 2002* is upon us and you can check out the full review in the last issue. The game's based around the 2002 season (obviously), and incorporates the new rules as well as each one of this season's teams. This demo is a work in progress so it doesn't include all the new features. However, it does give a good indication of how the game will play, and with the chance to race in the Australian Grand Prix in either a Ferrari, McLaren, Sauber or Williams, we don't think you'll be disappointed.

Each team has their top two drivers, so it's up to you whose racing boots you'd like to step into, and cars can be set up to your liking before a race. The Grand Prix also includes practice sessions (qualifying and warm-up, as well as of course, the race itself). Qualifying is a good idea unless you want to start at the back of the grid, and practice sessions are an ideal way to decide how you want to tweak your settings. There are various driving aids available for beginners such as automatic breaking and gearing, though we think the best experience is one with everything set on manual.

# STEALTH COMBAT

CD2/DVD Pub: Cryo Reviewed: Issue 117 (84%)



Try and be as nonchalant as you can around the base, but make sure you deactivate those nukes.

Let's face it, in the world of computer games the future is never a very pleasant place. In *Stealth Combat*, expect more of the same. It's 2038 and the world is split between two warring factions, the Economic and Military Alliance (EMA) and the Great Empire. Your job is in enemy reconnaissance (think futuristic James

Bond without the sex and Martinis, and replace Aston Martins with transformer-style fighting vehicles). This demo contains two missions, English Menace and The Unknown Vessel, one from each side of the warring factions. Sadly there are no tutorials so you'll have to pick it up as you go along.

# AGE OF WONDERS 2

CD2/DVD Pub: Take 2



She may look like a fairy but she packs a punch.

In the full *Age Of Wonders II* game (the sequel to one of the myriad fantasy turn-based RTS games that we were swamped with during the late '90s), you play as a newly appointed wizard king who has to conquer the seven spheres of magic to unite his realm. In this beta demo you

have just one mission, Inioch's Legacy, where you play as one of two siblings – Julia, part of the elf race or Meandor, the dark elf. The task in hand is to protect the realm from the evil fire wizard Yaka. Check out the readme file for a detailed guide on all aspects of the demo.

# RICOCHET

CD2/DVD Pub: Reflexive Entertainment



It you hit a bomb right, it explodes the other bricks around it.

A nice little retro number for you this month with *Ricochet*, an arcade-style cross between pinball and *Space Invaders*. Carefully bounce the ion spheres off your shield to explode the blocks and gain points. Some bricks are harder to break than others, and can only be broken with precise hits. There are

also the obligatory power-ups which can increase or decrease the size of your balls (cue *Carry On*-style sound effects), and others which can armour your ship and speed up or slow down the game. Like all games of this type it's hugely addictive, and must be approached with caution.



## PATCHES

CD1

Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault 1.1.1

Return To Castle Wolfenstein 1.32

## DEMOS

CD1

Michael Schumacher Racing World

Laser Squad Nemesis 1.8

## MOD REVIEWS

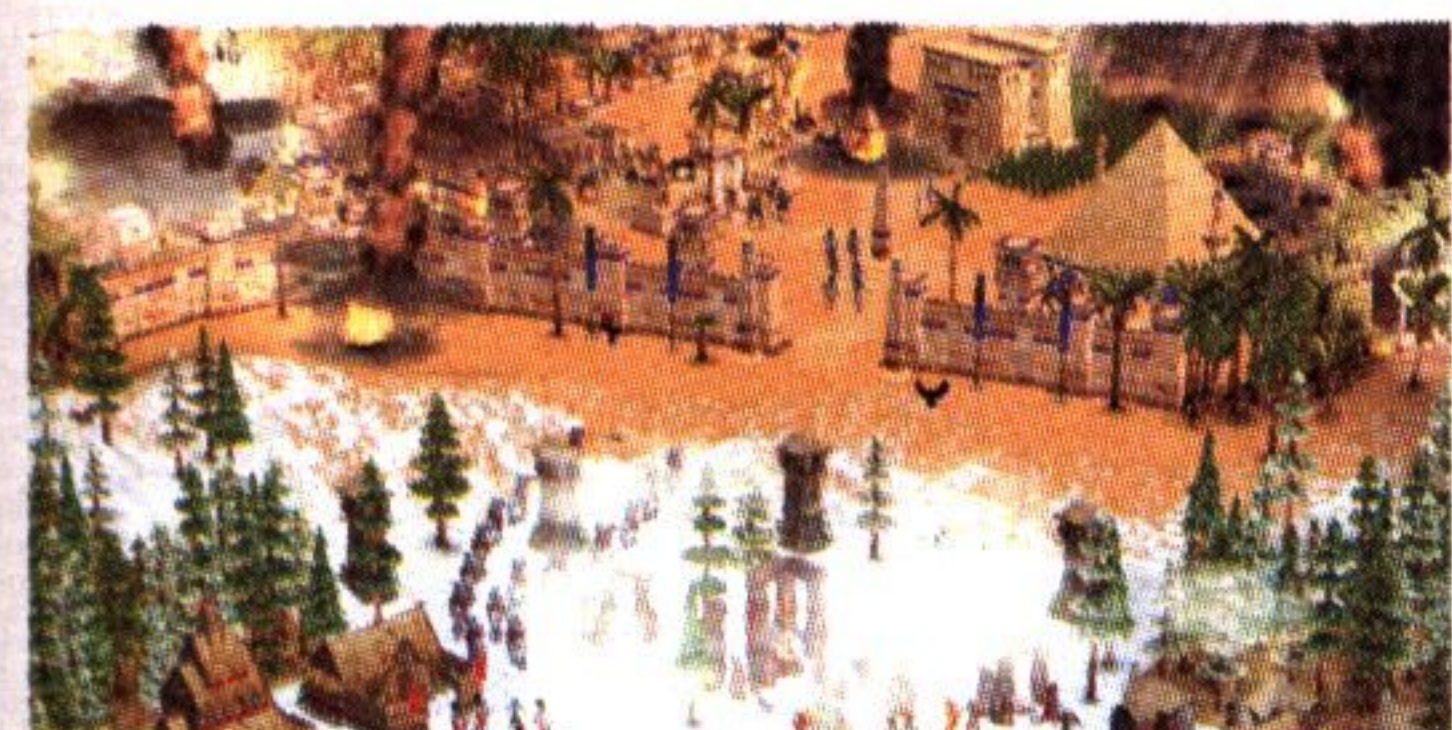
CD1

Tactical Ops 3.1.5

Quake III – Quick Death v2.0

## BEST OF E3

CD1



TOCA Racing Driver E3 Trailer

Breed E3 Trailer

New World Order

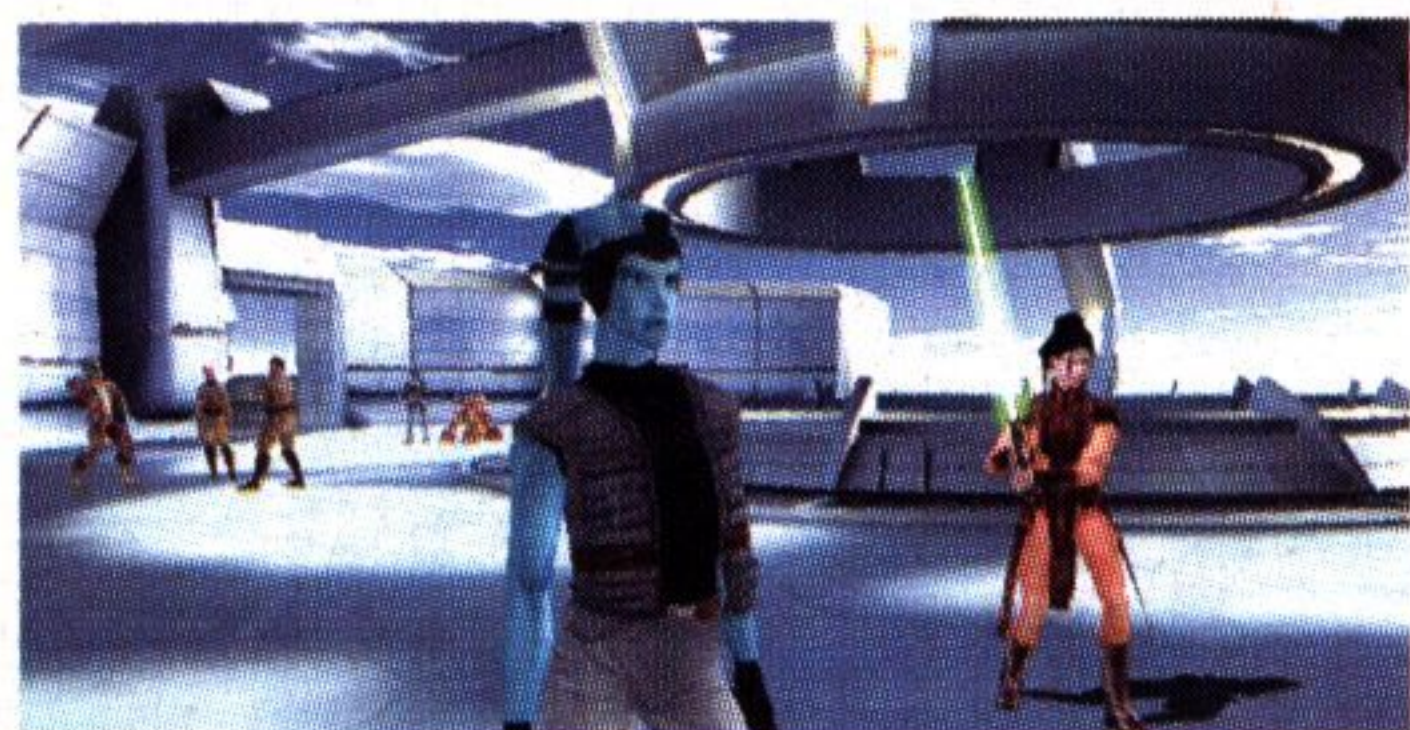
Project IGI 2 E3 Trailer

Asheron's Call 2 E3 Trailer

Age Of Mythology E3 trailer

SWAT 4: Urban Justice

Star Wars Galaxies E3 Trailer



Tron 2.0 E3 trailer

Imperium Galactica III E3 Trailer

The Sum Of All Fears

Operation Flashpoint: Resistance

EverQuest II E3 Griffon Model

Indiana Jones And The Emperor's Tomb

Knights Of The Old Republic E3 Trailer

## EXTENDED PLAY CD1

JKII Map: Star Destroyer

JKII Map: Deathstar Hanger

JKII Map: Bospin Arena

JKII Map: Bospin Cloud Platform

JKII Map: Face Off

JKII Map: GE Arena X

JKII Map: Crusher

JKII Map: Blade

CheatStation

## PATCHES

CD2

Serious Sam: The Second Encounter

Divine Divinity: Demo Patch

Nascar 2002 1.1

Counter-Strike Retail

## EXTENDED PLAY CD2

Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast 1.03

## MOD REVIEWS

CD2

Global Warfare Beta 1.2

## MOVIES

CD2

Praetorians E3 trailer

## DEMOS

CD2

Ricochet

Elixir

# DVD EXCLUSIVES

ALL THE CONTENT ON THIS PAGE IS ONLY AVAILABLE ON THE DVD EDITION OF PC ZONE. TO SUBSCRIBE AND GET A PACKED DVD EVERY MONTH, TURN TO PAGE 108

### SUPERTEST

The days of *Counter-Strike* at lunch-time are temporarily gone as we're currently indulging in the classic that is *Quake III Arena* (dm17 and dm18 being the favoured maps). This month's Supertest sees us debating the *QIII* mods that we think make the great game even greater. Did we pick the right winner? There's only one way to find out...

### THE CONTENDERS

Jailbreak: POW  
Proball  
PainKeep Arena  
Alliance

### EXTENDED PLAY

Jedi Knight II Tools  
Jedi Knight II Demo Map

### BEST OF E3

Metal Gear Solid 2:  
Substance E3  
Duality E3 Trailer  
Colin McRae  
Rally 3 E3  
Trailer

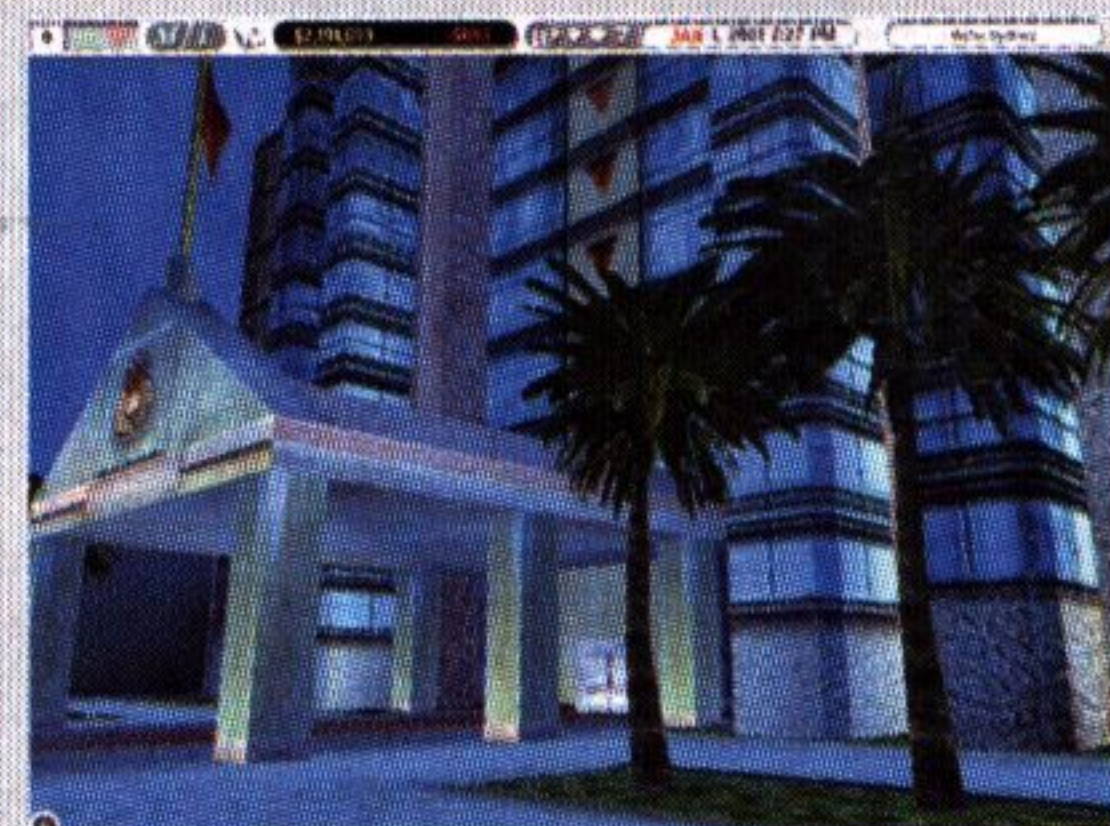
Splinter Cell E3 Trailer  
Battlefield 1942  
New World Order

### PLAYABLE DEMOS

Mobile Forces Demo  
Zanzarah: The Hidden Portal  
Hotel Giant  
Gore  
Universal Studios Monsterville

### THE MODSQUAD

The best new mods every month – see page 116 for full reviews.  
Red Diamond Group:  
Operation Sulking Viper



GODZ 1.07

Quake III: Quick Death v2.0

### MODS

Firearms 2.6  
Day Of Defeat v2.0 to 2.1

### PATCHES

Kingdom Under Fire 1.2.0.5  
Legend Of Mir 1.3 Update  
Delta Force: Land Warrior  
Warrior Kings  
IL-2 Sturmovik

### MOVIES

XIII E3 Trailer  
Rayman 3 E3 Trailer  
Anno 1503AD E3 Trailer  
Sudden Strike 2 E3 Trailer  
Sabotain E3 Trailer  
Psychotoxic E3 Trailer  
No Man's Land E3 Trailer  
Lineage E3 Trailer  
Iron Storm E3 Trailer  
Icewind Dale II  
E3 Trailer  
Hearts From Iron  
E3 Trailer



Haegamonia E3 Trailer  
Heaven & Hell E3 Trailer  
Grom E3 Trailer  
Ghostmaster E3 Trailer  
Fuel E3 Trailer  
Age Of Mythology – Tornado  
Age Of Mythology – Scarabs  
Age Of Mythology – Minotaurs  
Age Of Mythology – Lightning  
American Conquest E3 Trailer  
Karma: Immortality E3 Trailer  
Horizons  
Galactic Civilizations  
Celtic Kings:  
Rage Of War  
Ace Of Angels  
Enclave  
Hoverace  
New Legends





# ESCAPE TO MIDDLE-EARTH



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# FIGHT CLUB

Membership is limited to those who love to take their aggression out on others: on **PC ZONE's** servers, the Free-For-All or at LAN parties.

**Martin Korda** has the details



**Counter-Strike.** The choice of online fraggers the world over.

**NO MATTER** how much they've tried, no FPS has come even close to dethroning the mighty *Counter-Strike* from its place at the summit of the online shooter hierarchy. And it's because of this

that we're running a monthly Free-For-All for you to play with and against us. There you'll be tested to your limits, both by us and by other readers, gunning to prove that they're the best of the best. Think

you can prove you're better than any of us? Think you can shoot someone in the head from half a mile away? Think you can remember a date? Those who can, join the **PC ZONE** Free-For-All. See you there.



## PC ZONE GAME SERVERS POWERED BY JOLT.CO.UK

### NEW FAST SERVERS... WHY YES, HOW DID YOU KNOW?

We've switched our game servers across to the ultra-fast Jolt service, which means that lag should now be a thing of the past. We've also changed the way you find them, and from this point on we'll refer to them by their name rather than by their address. You can use names in place of IP addresses

whenever you want to connect, either from within the game or from a server browser such as The All-Seeing Eye or GameSpy, but remember to use the updated password printed below each and every month. For a full guide on getting onto our servers see page 120.

Team Fortress Classic Public Server #1 – [tfc1.zonegames.co.uk](http://tfc1.zonegames.co.uk)  
Team Fortress Classic Public Server #2 – [tfc2.zonegames.co.uk](http://tfc2.zonegames.co.uk)

Quake III: Arena Public Server – [q3.zonegames.co.uk](http://q3.zonegames.co.uk)

Counter-Strike Public Server #1 – [cs1.zonegames.co.uk](http://cs1.zonegames.co.uk)  
Counter-Strike Public Server #2 – [cs2.zonegames.co.uk](http://cs2.zonegames.co.uk)  
Counter-Strike Public Server #3 – [cs3.zonegames.co.uk](http://cs3.zonegames.co.uk)

Counter-Strike Public Server #4 – [cs4.zonegames.co.uk](http://cs4.zonegames.co.uk)

Unreal Tournament Public Server – [ut.zonegames.co.uk](http://ut.zonegames.co.uk)

Return To Castle Wolfenstein Public Server –  
[rtcw.zonegames.co.uk](http://rtcw.zonegames.co.uk)

PASSWORD: **bootleg**

## LAN ROVER

### STEVE 'SCALPER' RANDALL GIVES A RUN-DOWN ON ALL TOMORROW'S LAN PARTIES...

If you've yet to go to a LAN, and can't see what the fuss is about, try this out. Change the names and fighting styles of the *Unreal Tournament* bots to replicate your friends and you'll find it really changes the whole feel of the game. Alternatively, just visit one of these...

■ [www.GameHedz.net](http://www.GameHedz.net) are having their next LAN in August – time and place TBC.

■ [www.flinfrag.co.uk](http://www.flinfrag.co.uk) are continuing their LAN series on August 11 and September 8 at the Holiday Inn in North Wales.

■ My own [www.ggfan.co.uk](http://www.ggfan.co.uk) will have a LAN when you want it – playing the game you want. Get voting for the next LAN at the homepage. Although the next one will probably be *Neverwinter Nights*.

■ Newcomers [www.lanarchy.co.uk](http://www.lanarchy.co.uk) are starting in London's Watford on July 20 with a one day event. Check it out.

■ Not forgetting the [www.hgfan.co.uk](http://www.hgfan.co.uk) which will have its 100 person LAN in East London over the August bank holiday weekend. If your names not on the list contact me at [scalper@ggfan.co.uk](mailto:scalper@ggfan.co.uk) or via the hgfan website.

## FREE-FOR-ALL

**THURSDAY  
18 JULY**

6.30pm – 9.00pm

**Counter-Strike server**

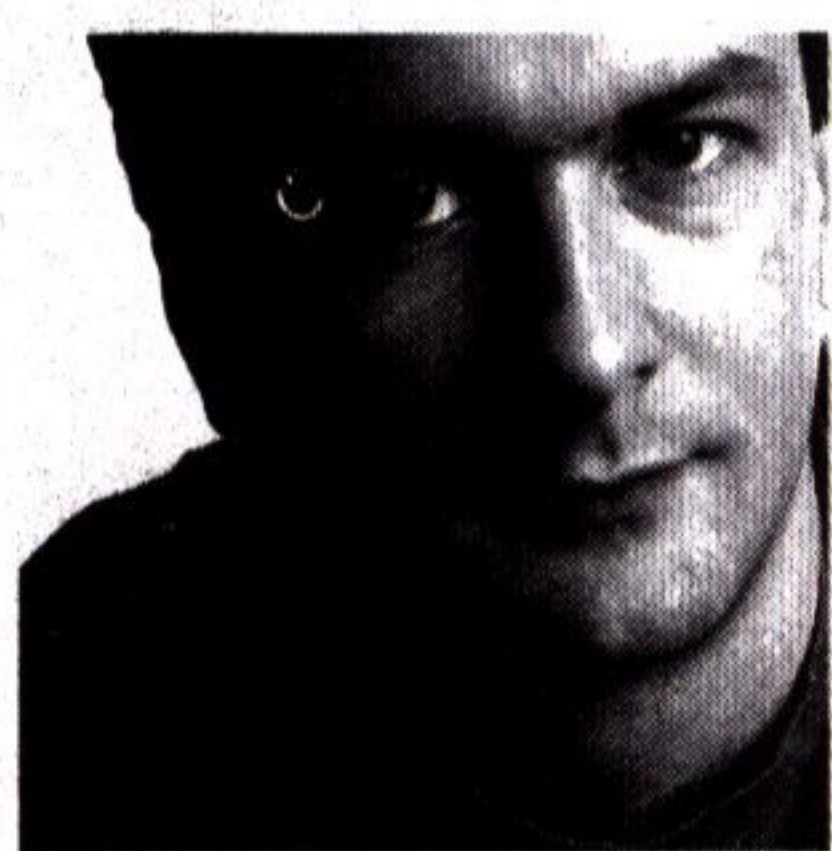
## KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Dave Woods	Kid Unknown
Richie Shoemaker	Zapatero
Martin Korda	Nameless One
Anthony Holden	Shokupan
Mark Hill	Leatherface
Paul Presley	I R Baboon
Matthew Cheshire	Burnside
Phil Clark	Shit Kicker
Danny King-Smith	Ronin
Colin Mackleworth	M.A.C.H.I.N.E.

## FREE-FOR-ALL CONNECTION DETAILS

Connecting to our Free-For-All Server is extremely simple. And to make things even easier still, we have given the server a permanent home. To hook up from within the game, open the *Half-Life* console and type password pczone and then press enter. After this type connect [ffa.zonegames.co.uk](http://ffa.zonegames.co.uk) and then press enter. You will be taken right there. You can also add the server to popular game browsers such as The All-Seeing Eye or GameSpy 3D by entering [ffa.zonegames.co.uk](http://ffa.zonegames.co.uk) where you would normally provide an IP address. If you experience any problems connecting on the night of the Free-For-All then check our forum at [www.pczone.co.uk](http://www.pczone.co.uk) in case of any last-minute changes or information updates.

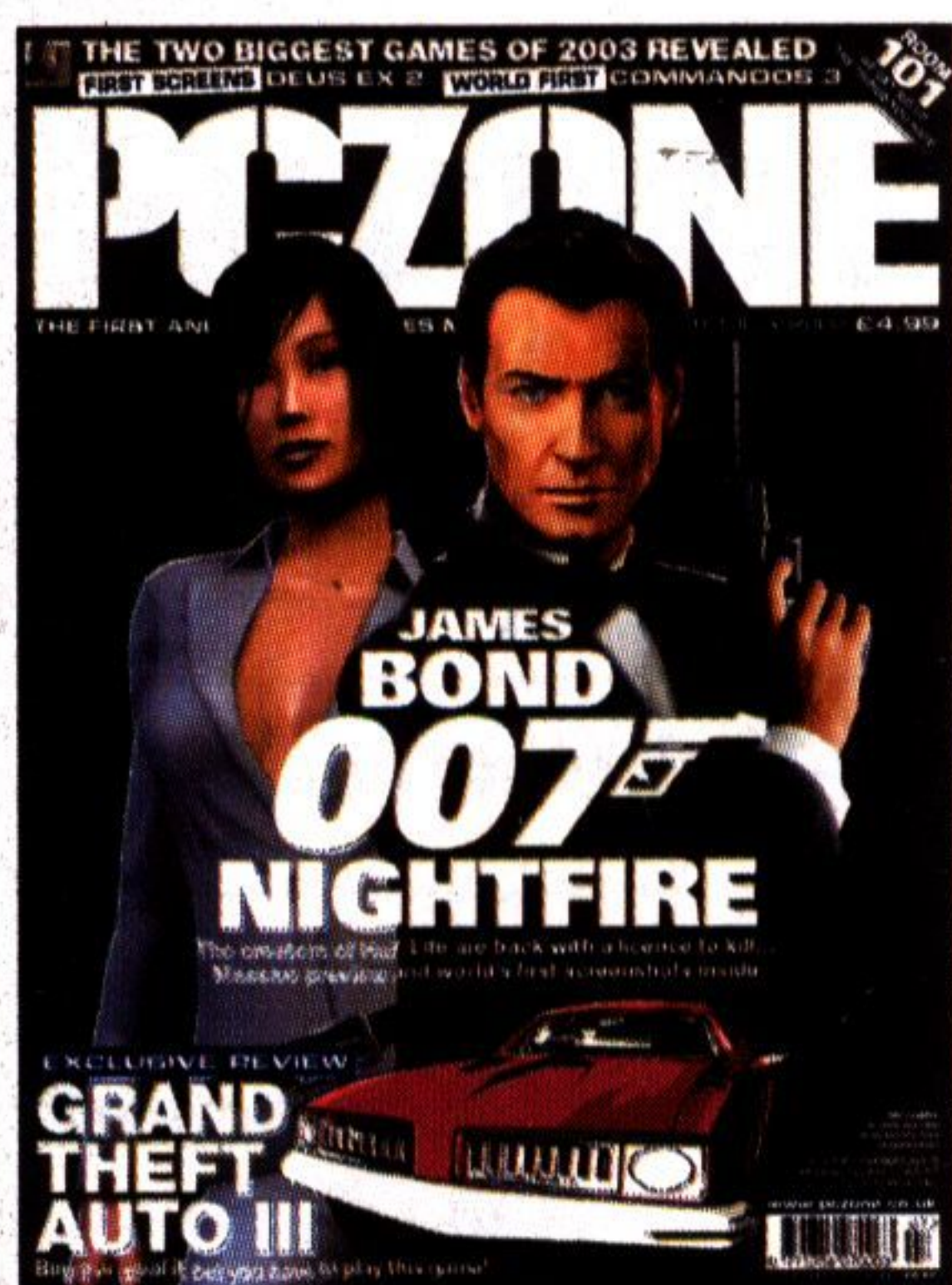




# MAILBOX

Everybody needs a good rant every now and again, and we're here to listen...

■ **HOLDING COURT** Dave Woods



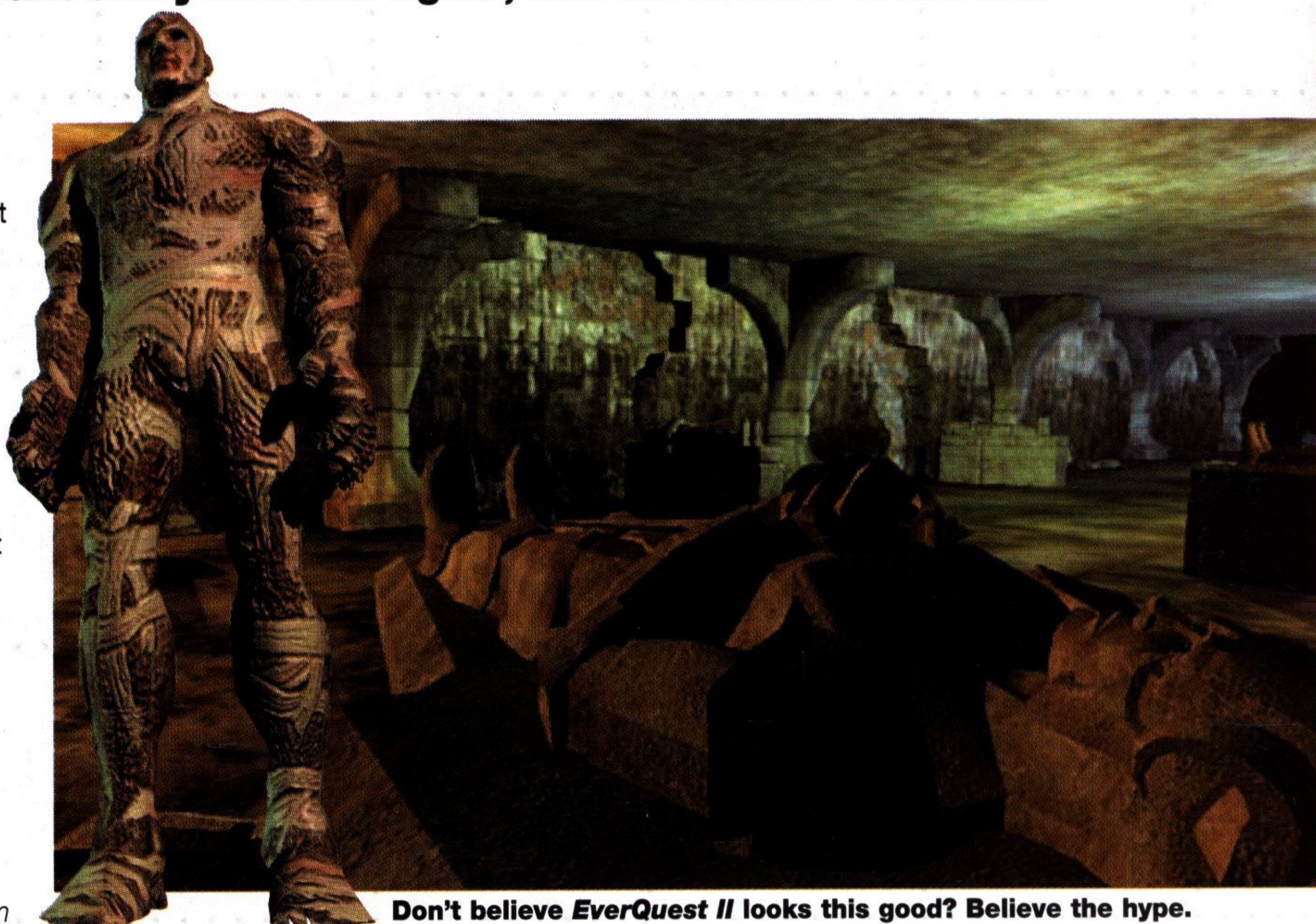
## PUH-LEAZE!

OK, about those screenshots of *EverQuest II*. I mean c'mon, what game do you know that has a playable environment that looks like that? And hold on, this is an online game where low lag counts for all, and yet you still expect us to believe it's going to look like that. Puh-leaze!

I've got a term for screenshots like this. How about 'fake' or 'made up' or, more accurately, 'bollocks'. I wish the new EQ could look like that, but somehow I don't think so. You guys should know better, consider yourselves severely chastised. Anyway, what's wrong with EQ right now? I like it. Leave it alone.

Graham  
"Fortysixer/Thulsordoom"  
Schofield

Consider yourself wrong. We've seen the game running online at E3 and it looks even better than the static screenshots. Like other next-gen online games *EQ II* is going to be broadband-only, although if you're not planning to upgrade you can still play the original EQ, which Sony Online is going to carry on supporting. For once you can



Don't believe *EverQuest II* looks this good? Believe the hype.

believe the hype. However we agree with you about fake screenshots – there are lots around and we'll do our best to point them out in the future.

## DIY

Having read Paul Mark's letter (issue #116), I was compelled to reply. I too believe that games today need to have a place close to our hearts – touch us in a way. But the simple truth is that game developers/publishers really can't be bothered to make huge, emotional games. They just get an idea (such as *Mall Tycoon*) reckon people will buy it by the truckload and publish it.

What the games community really needs is more underrated developers making games. Can anyone remember when they had a Commodore 64 and made a text adventure using BASIC? Those days have long passed, but the memories remain, simply because they were so much fun.

With the advent of software such as DarkBasic (and the soon to be released DarkBasic PRO) people from home, with the right knowledge and patience are developing excellent, fully playable 3D games. They don't have publishers hurrying them up – and best of all it's a hobby. So in conclusion, I propose that everyone out there, who loves to

play games should try and create their own masterpieces from scratch. I know I will.

Niall O'Brien.

When you've finished, send them in. If they're fun to play we'll stick 'em on our cover CDs and make you famous.

## WHAT'S THE STORY?

After reading Paul Marks' letter last issue ('Emotional Hooligans') I decided that I agreed with him entirely. Games deserve to be written in an intelligent and eloquent manner that brings out an emotional response from the player. At the same time I realise how hard it is for developers to do it, and in a way Mr Marks is ignoring the big picture.

What I'm getting at is that if you want your game to succeed you have to have a decent engine, with good AI and once you've got that and balanced the gameplay your money is spent. To go the extra mile and combine it with an Oscar-winning storyline is a ludicrous notion. Even when

it happens, we'll still find something to complain about. I say we should respect the people that are creating amazing games at the moment and stop knocking them for sacrificing story for quality entertainment.

James Lewis

Does it really cost that much extra to combine a decent narrative? Admittedly you have to find someone with a flair for a script but then all you have to do is sit him in a room and feed him a few burgers every now and again. Lack of creativity can't always be put down to a lack of money. Imagination doesn't cost a thing.

## AI OR NOT AI?

I've just finished reading issue 116 of *PC ZONE* and although I'm happy to fork out for the DVD issue, I'm not too chuffed to find that about 99 per cent of the *Half-Life* mods included were multiplayer only. Also, how about stating whether or not the mods, reviewed in the Ext Play section,

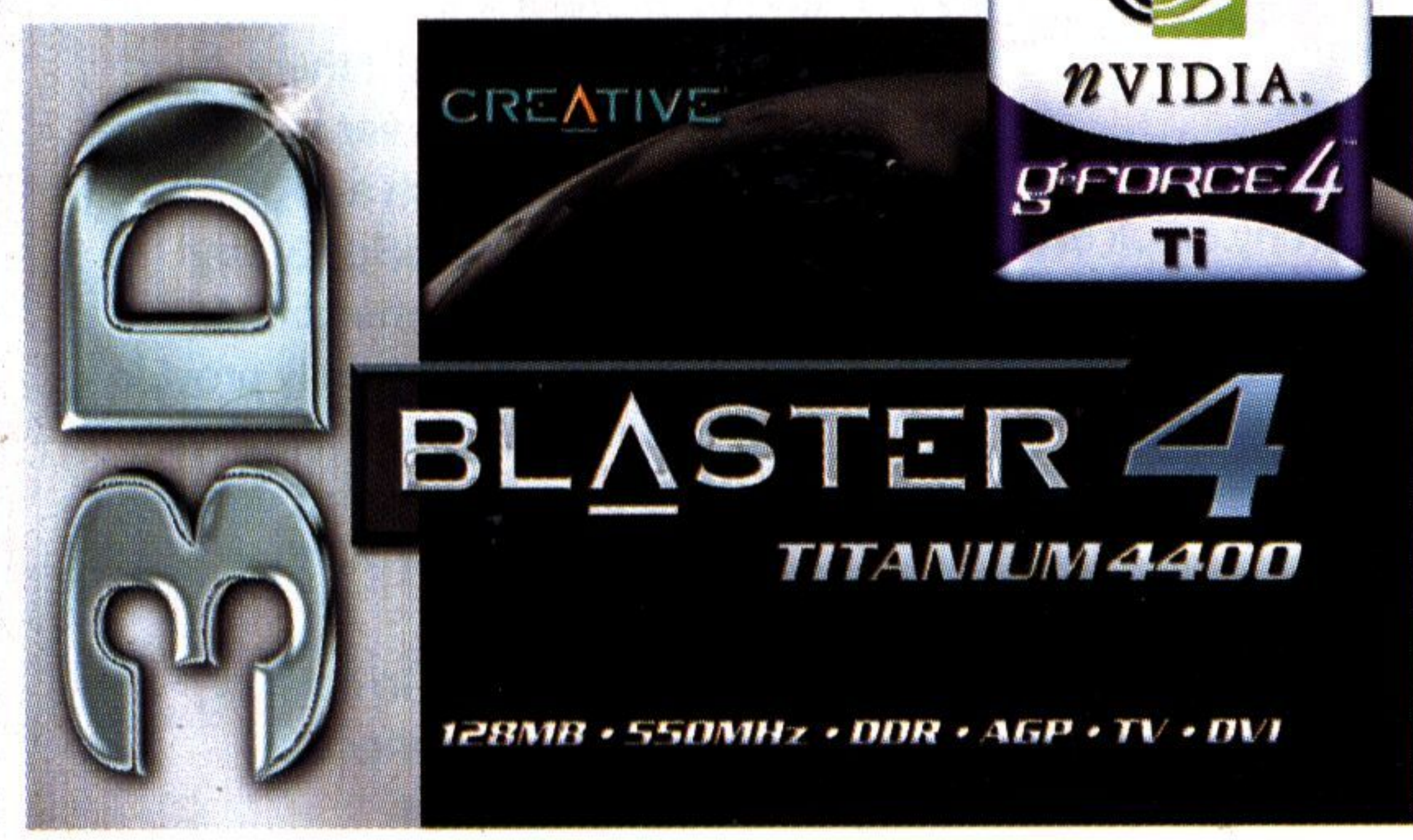
**"What the games community really needs is more underrated developers making games"**

NIALL O'BRIEN

## GOT SOMETHING TO GET OFF YOUR CHEST? WRITE TO...

MAILBOX, PC ZONE, 30 CLEVELAND ST, LONDON W1T 4JD, OR E-MAIL: LETTERS@PCZONE.CO.UK

■ The Letter of the Month wins a spanking new graphics card courtesy of the lovely people at Creative Labs. The Blaster 4 Titanium 4400 is as good as the name suggests, and sporting the new GeForce 4 chipset, it gives you more bang than a rabbit stuffed with semtex.





are single-player or multiplayer. I'm sure online gaming is fun, but isn't it just because software houses can't be arsed to program decent AI into games?

Mick Harvey

You'll find that most mods are multiplayer only, although our reviews will state whether bots are present and if they'll give you a decent game. When a single-player mod does come along you'll definitely know about it if you read the review, although from now on we'll tag them separately as well. And I'm not sure if you can put the entire genre of online gaming in the bin because you think developers are lazy.

#### ASK, DON'T GET

I have a cheeky request. Being a regular reader I was wondering what you do with all the hardware once you've finished reviewing it. I really enjoy playing the latest games but I can't keep up with the constant upgrade race to keep my games running smooth. I was wondering if you happen to have any spare motherboards lying around and maybe a graphics card to go with it.

Chris Smitty

What's that? I can't hear you... you're breaking up.

#### COUNTER-VIEW #1

I think Phil Wand was a bit quick to judge *Counter-Strike*. "Rednecks and retards," erm, what? "I spend 38 minutes dead." That's because you're crap. "There is never any



**Dungeon Siege is an RPG of great beauty but the plot's a bit thin on the ground.**

teamwork on public servers." That depends on the ones you use. I stick to ones where we all know each other and all stick to certain rules. Nobody pisses about. People who are good are recognised for it and cheaters are called "llama cheating h4X0rz" or whatever the phrase is. "Those that stick around would be – and indeed are – cannon fodder in any other game." Sheesh, you call yourself a gamer?

ParaMite 100

#### COUNTER-VIEW #2

After reading Phil Wand's Comment last month regarding *Counter-Strike* I had to write in to complain. I normally agree with everything your magazine says and I know that you've been raving about *Counter-Strike* since its early days, so why the change of heart? Some online games might be ruined by people cheating or being abusive but I don't think you can blame the game for that. *Counter-Strike* is the biggest online game in the world because it's the best and it's free. Surely Phil Wand should have taken the latter into account before blasting his mouth off.

**The Comment page gives our writers the chance to**

vent their spleen and it gives you a chance to get to know them a bit better. You're not supposed to agree with everything that everyone writes there – in fact one of the reasons we do Comment is to provoke a healthy debate on important issues. Phil Wand's entitled to his views on *Counter-Strike* (even if he is wrong) and the fact you've written in to complain means the column was a success.

#### DUNGEON #1

For the umpteenth time I have purchased a crap game on the strength of hype and your review, and I put this largely down to the lack of a demo. The offending game this time is *Dungeon Siege*. I saw that a demo of it was promised "next month" in the same issue of *PC ZONE* as it was reviewed but it didn't happen. I suspect this delay was caused by the developers/publishers, possibly as a tactic to ensure more sales, and next time I'll be more patient. Definitely.

Sam Morris.

#### DUNGEON #2

Firstly I would like to say you are right, *Dungeon Siege* is indeed worthy of being in the top ten of its genre. My only problem with it is that when playing a game I usually stop when I've got to the end of the level. *Dungeon Siege* is seamless and has no loading from area to area making it almost impossible to stop. For

## READER REVIEWS

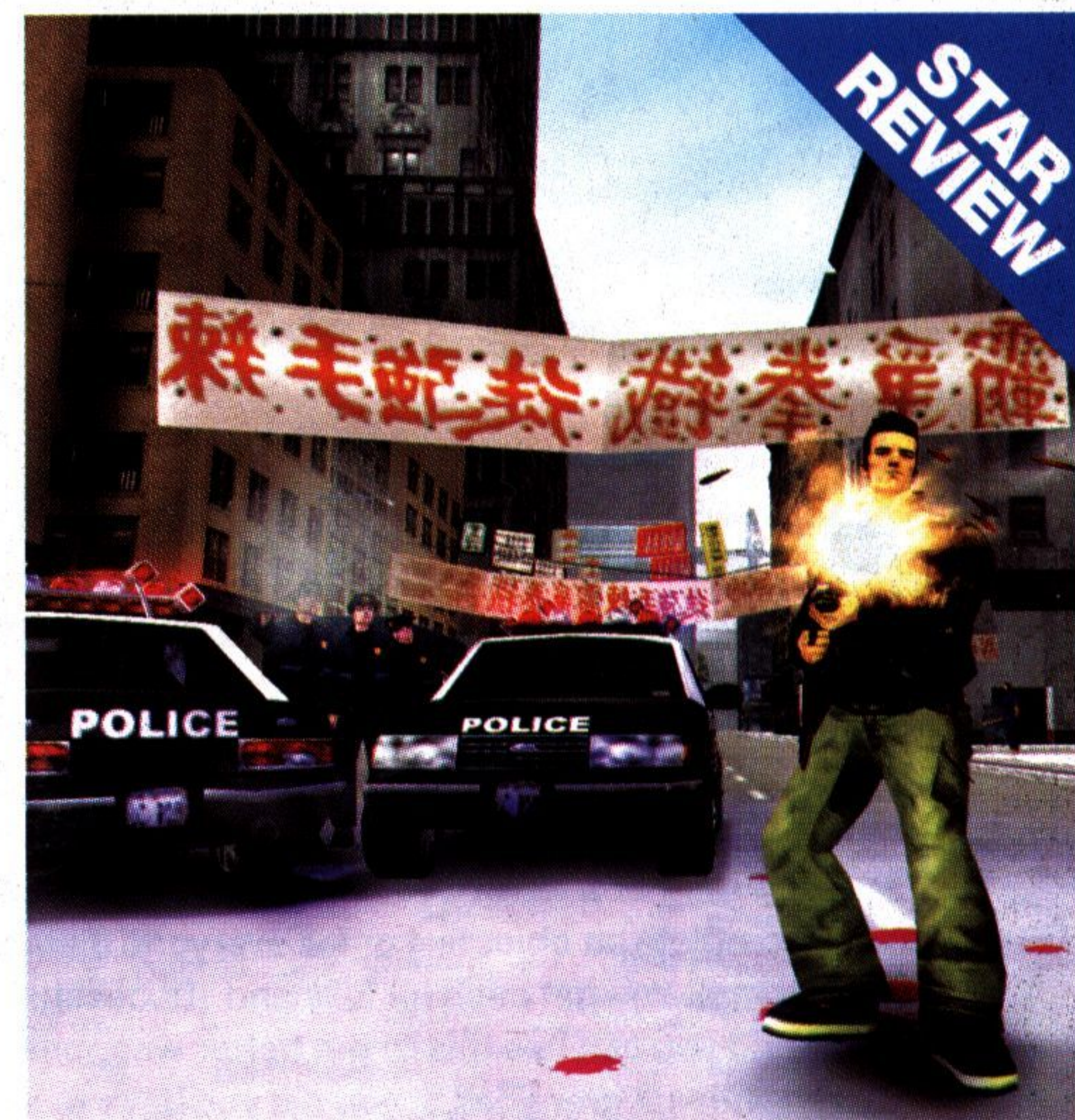
### FANCY A CAREER WRITING FOR A GAMES MAG? WELL PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT...

We want reviews of the games you love or the ones you hate. Each one should be between 50 and 350 words and come with a score out of 100. The best one wins a game from the current charts. Send your review to the standard mailbox address (see boxout) and remember to include your name, address and telephone number.

#### GRAND THEFT AUTO III

PC ZONE ISSUE 116 – 95%

**We Said...** "At the end of the day, finding fault with a game like this is akin to bedding Kylie Minogue and complaining that you got a pube stuck between your teeth afterwards."



The first GTA was a controversial and overly violent top-down racing game that made up for in gameplay what it lacked in visuals. After the success came the inevitable sequel, a game which upped the ante in terms of graphics but which lacked the original gameplay. It was with this in mind that I awaited the arrival of *GTA III*.

The first thing that disappointed me about the game was having to call the help desk to sort out a problem running the game, but in their defence they were quick and efficient and after downloading a patch the game worked fine. From that point on all my doubts were assuaged, all frustrations forgotten and the disappointment of *GTA II* forgiven. This is without a doubt one of THE best games I have ever played. It recaptures the gameplay of the original yet seems to show off everything that's good about the PC. The driving models are superb with genuine variation between vehicles, and the graphics are what earlier PC cut-scenes dreamt of being when they grew up. It's quite odd to stop in mid-whack to admire the scenery or pause after a near-fatal crash to admire the quality of the aftermath.

It's a game full of excellent touches and treats, and it rewards gameplay and exploration with sub-missions and comical scenes. Overall it exudes gameplay and style and mixes it with some of the best comedy violence. Brilliant.

Ned Kellyh

**SCORE: 93%**



# READER REVIEWS

## COUNTER-STRIKE

PC ZONE ISSUE 109 - 93%

**We said... "Overall Counter-Strike is still the daddy, with more servers in more countries than any other game, and an almost fanatical army of fans, bleary-eyed examples of which can be found deep in the bowels of ZONE towers."**



After reading Phil Wand's Comment I had to write in and set the record straight. If you haven't played Counter-Strike you're missing out on one of the best games of all time.

Playing as either a terrorist or counter-terrorist the aim is to complete an objective or kill everyone on the opposing team. You get cash for kills and successful missions and you can use this to get better weapons or flash/conventional grenades. If you die you have to sit out until the round's finished. It sounds simple and that's why it's such a brilliant game. Like every good game CS takes an hour to get into and years to master. When something goes according to plan you won't get a better feeling in any other game? Why? Because you're beating real people, and you know they're going to be pissed.

Stuart Smith

SCORE: 95%

I never knew what gripped people so completely about multiplayer games until I played Counter-Strike. The first couple of hours were a painful and humiliating experience but then I discovered that it really is a team game. We were gelling, following orders and adopting team strategies.

At one point, as a counter terrorist, I rushed in to defuse a bomb. I was the last CT left in the game and the tension as my teammates watched on was electric. For those who don't know, defusing a bomb takes a fixed amount of time and the progress bar seemed to take forever. I was shuffling about on my seat mindful of the fact that detonation was imminent, too close for any of us to call. Too late, blammo, and I erupted in fury, while the room collapsed into fits of maniacal laughter. I've never experienced that kind of tension playing a PC game. For me it was like watching white noise, which suddenly resolved itself into a 5.1 digital surround sound cinematic treat.

Jo Lewis

SCORE: 91%



Can great games really be too long?

six hours I played a little bit, then a bit more, hoping there would be some kind of definite end of level in sight. I suppose that serves me right for being so weak minded.

Chris 'Crazy' Man

Approximately 89 per cent of you seem to agree that 89 per cent is a fair score for Dungeon Siege so I think we must have got it right. There was a demo on last issue's ZONE but obviously it came a bit late to save Sam.

## GAME OVER?

I would just like to say a few things about Elder Scrolls 3: Morrowind. As an avid RPG fan, and after playing through Dungeon Siege (which took me about 45 hours) I was intrigued by the claims made by the creators of Morrowind: 100 hours of gameplay for the single-player quest and an additional 400 to view everything on offer. I appreciate the advantages of an open-ended game but this is too much. Comparatively, Dungeon Siege was the perfect length; long enough to become immersed, but

not so long that loved ones report a missing person to the police. I have a lot of respect for the time and effort it must have taken to create it, but just not much time to play it.

Tom Rogers

I've never really understood the argument that a great

game's too long to play. If it's a fantastic experience, surely it doesn't matter how long it takes to complete it? In my opinion a game's only too long if it doesn't keep you hooked.

## MERTON

I thought the Room 101 feature in issue 117 was hilarious. Paul Merton's must be quaking in his boots - The Man Who Knows should be signed to the BBC for the next series, although if the guests were actually face-to-face with him he'd probably end up being hit. Keep up the good work.

Spencer Brook

The Man Who Knows would like to say thanks but he makes a habit of never appearing grateful for anything. You never know when the favour's going to be called back apparently. **EF**

## BOOTIFUL

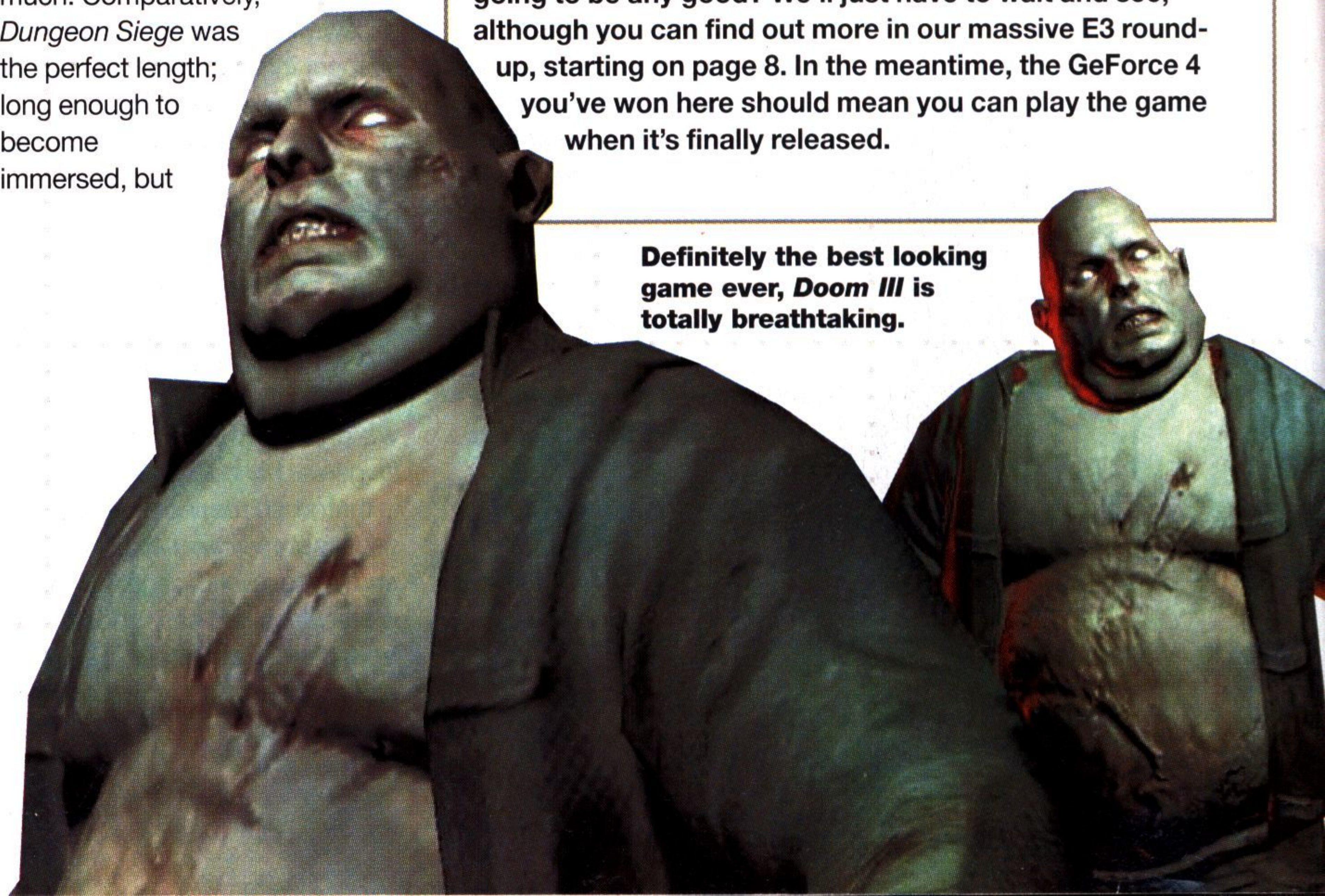
The graphics vs gameplay argument is to gamers what Nature vs Nurture is to biologists, but having just seen the latest Doom III screenshots I'm going to have to pick my jaw from the floor. Amazingly they seem really close to the detail found in pre-rendered scenes. For the past decade hardware and game-engine technology has been steadily advancing and with Doom III it appears they've made a real breakthrough.

I feel kind of odd writing what ends up as a eulogy to Doom III as I usually like to play a game before I pass judgment on it. But something about those screenshots (and I haven't yet seen the E3 videos and feature that will probably come with the next PCZ) made me realise that we are coming to the point where imaginations are free to run riot. And where better for this to flourish than on the mature and freethinking PC community?

Rainer

The Doom III engine is absolutely incredible and in my mind definitely marks the 'next big thing'. Is the game going to be any good? We'll just have to wait and see, although you can find out more in our massive E3 round-up, starting on page 8. In the meantime, the GeForce 4 you've won here should mean you can play the game when it's finally released.

Definitely the best looking game ever, Doom III is totally breathtaking.









# THE PCZONE A-LIST

## SHOOTERS

### MEDAL OF HONOR



It may have taken years but finally there's a shooter worthy of toppling *Half-Life*. Brilliant level design, surprisingly good AI, an unparalleled sense of atmosphere and intensity, not to mention beautifully scripted scenes. It's also the first game that Richie has finished three times in as many months, and the first FPS Rhianna has finished in her life, which gives you some indication of the game's worth.

PUB EA DEV 2015

PCZ ISSUE 112



#### HALF-LIFE: GENERATIONS

Unchallenged for three years, *Half-Life* redefined its genre with a cracking atmosphere and a compelling plot. It now comes bundled with the excellent Opposing Force add-on pack and the world's favourite mod, *Counter-Strike*.

PUB Vivendi DEV Valve Software

PCZ ISSUE 71



#### JEDI KNIGHT II: JEDI OUTCAST

The first *Star Wars* game to be awarded a PC ZONE Classic award since the original *Jedi Knight* back in 1997. This is more than just a simple FPS, it's frustrating, rewarding and extremely good fun. A new hope has come.

PUB Activision DEV Raven

PCZ ISSUE 115



#### ALIENS VS PREDATOR 2

If we rated games on atmosphere and tension *AvP2* would've been the highest-scoring game ever. The multiplayer game and 3D engine brought the score down, but for scares nothing can touch this three-way fragfest.

PUB Vivendi DEV Monolith

PCZ ISSUE 110



#### MAX PAYNE

It's not big and it's not clever, but for style and content *Max Payne* receives top marks. The character animations and soon-to-be-copied-by-everyone Bullet Time mode are the real stars, it's just a shame it only lasts a few hours.

PUB Take 2 DEV Remedy

PCZ ISSUE 107



#### RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

A mixed bag. Visually it might be at the top of the pile, but the single-player game has been completely eclipsed by *Medal Of Honor*. Forget that and head for the multiplayer action instead, where the game comes into its own.

PUB Activision DEV Gray Matter/Nerve

PCZ ISSUE 112



#### UNREAL TOURNAMENT

*Unreal Tournament's* multiplayer mode is more than a match for *Quake III*, with a combination of well-designed maps and diverse gameplay. Single-player mode is a tad short, but it's still more of a challenge than most.

PUB Infogrames DEV Epic/Digital Extremes

PCZ ISSUE 81



#### QUAKE III ARENA

Still going strong with a constant stream of mods and add-ons, *Quake III* is probably the best game for pure deathmatch multiplayer, but in terms of numbers it's trounced online by *Half-Life* and *Counter-Strike*.

PUB Activision DEV id

PCZ ISSUE 87



#### CLIVE BARKER'S UNDYING

This atmospheric shooter is one of the most unsettling we've seen and the superb graphics and sound will have you jumping like a little girl. A game that pushes the boundaries of narrative gameplay.

PUB EA DEV EALA

PCZ ISSUE 101



#### TRIBES 2

If you're after quality co-operative action in expansive outdoor environments with superb visuals and smooth play, there's no better place to go than online with *Tribes 2*. If you're not much of a team player then steer clear.

PUB Vivendi DEV Dynamix

PCZ ISSUE 103

## STRATEGY

### SHOGUN: WARLORDS



Take command of enormous armies, engage in epic and bloody battles, send ninjas to assassinate generals and conquer your way through feudal Japan. This edition further improves the game's capable 3D engine, gives you greater customisation over your units and also lets you play as the Mongols. Copious in-game options never get in the way of the instant playability. *Shogun* will blow you away.

PUB EA DEV Creative Assembly

PCZ ISSUE 89



#### WARRIOR KINGS

A visually stunning and hugely ambitious RTS that melds the strategic diversity of *Battle Realms* with the huge 3D rolling landscapes of *Shogun*. With a compelling story to boot, no strategy fan should be without a copy.

PUB Microids DEV Black Cactus

PCZ ISSUE 114



#### COMMANDOS 2

There have been a few imitators of the squad-based strategy of *Commandos* but none have come close to this sequel. If, like us, you loved the first game, you'll love this massive, preposterously detailed follow-up even more.

PUB Eidos DEV Pyro Studio

PCZ ISSUE 108



#### COSSACKS: EUROPEAN WARS

There are 8,000 troops at your disposal in this historically accurate RTS. Smooth unit movement, a 3D landscape with real physics modelling and great graphics and sound make it truly absorbing. An essential purchase.

PUB CDV DEV GSC Gameworld

PCZ ISSUE 101



#### Z: STEEL SOLDIERS

*Z* will re-ignite your passion for strategy games with its fast-paced in-yr-face action that allows you to get down and dirty from the off. The AI is superb, and as it's entirely mouse-driven, it's simple and easy to get into.

PUB EON DEV Bitmap Brothers

PCZ ISSUE 101



#### ETHERLORDS

This unexpected gem might just be good enough to convert those who immediately associate 'turn-based' with the word 'geek'. The visuals and sound are stunning, the tactical variety truly staggering – fantastic stuff.

PUB JoWood DEV Nival Interactive

PCZ ISSUE 112



#### BATTLE REALMS

Emerging from the quagmire of all too similar RTS games this is a genuinely ground-breaking strategy game. It does have its flaws which include a tedious plot, but the great use of sound, visuals and gameplay shine through.

PUB Ubi Soft DEV Liquid Entertainment

PCZ ISSUE 111



#### AOEII: GOLD EDITION

It might not be radically different from the original, but sometimes evolution is just as good as revolution. In *AOEII* the gameplay is honed to perfection with balanced units and strong single and multiplayer campaigns. A great RTS.

PUB Microsoft DEV Ensemble Studios

PCZ ISSUE 84



#### SUDDEN STRIKE

*Sudden Strike* mixes WWII action with a heavy dose of realism in order to create a compelling strategy title. Its large-scale battles, huge selection of units and superb interface make it a must for RTS fans.

PUB CDV DEV Fireglow

PCZ ISSUE 96



#### SHATTERED GALAXY

This hugely involving online game combines a monthly *EverQuest*-style subscription-based role-playing experience with massive *Total Annihilation*-influenced combat. Only available from the States, but well worth the price.

PUB www.sgalaxy.com DEV Nexon

PCZ ISSUE 108



Welcome to the all-new **PC ZONE A-List**, the definitive buyer's guide for all discerning PC gamers. The games that grace these pages aren't just good, they're the best of the best in their respective genres, and our list is continually updated to show how each game stands in relation to its peers. Get in.

## ◀ ROLE-PLAYING GAMES ▶

### DEUS EX



Warren Spector is one of the true visionaries of the computer game medium, and this is his opus. Combining the finer elements of *Half-Life*, *System Shock 2* and *Thief*, *Deus Ex* is an RPG of complex beauty and a true revolution in computer gaming. The fascinating sci-fi plot and amazing attention to detail, combined with unparalleled player freedom are just some of the reasons why *Deus Ex* is a landmark in gaming.

PUB Eidos DEV Ion Storm  
PCZ ISSUE 93



#### NEW ENTRY THE ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

One of the most impressive RPGs we've seen for years. A massively open-ended world full of beautiful visuals, superb depth of gameplay and innovative character development make this a classic that will keep you totally absorbed.

PUB Ubi Soft DEV Bethesda Softworks  
PCZ ISSUE 117



#### PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

An incredible game from Black Isle, using the *Baldur's Gate* engine. With a compelling story, well-scripted dialogue and the best character development we've seen in any game of its kind, this is a dark, adult scorcher of an RPG.

PUB Interplay DEV Black Isle Studio  
PCZ ISSUE 87



#### DUNGEON SIEGE

Graphically brilliant, massively enjoyable and highly immersive, *Dungeon Siege* is one of the best RPGs to date and only misses out on a Classic because of the shortcomings in the narrative.

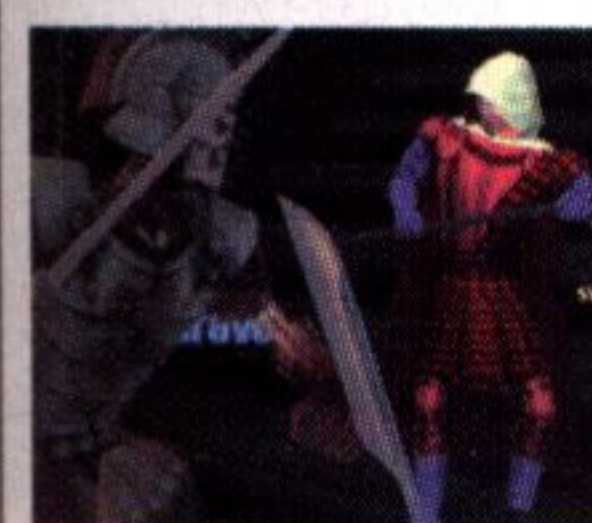
PUB Microsoft DEV Gas Powered Games  
PCZ ISSUE 115



#### SYSTEM SHOCK 2

Definitely one of the most original and disturbing games to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* manages to successfully mix the genres of role-playing, action and adventure into one. Play it with the lights off if you're hard enough.

PUB EA DEV Irrational Games  
PCZ ISSUE 80



#### DARK AGE OF CAMELOT

With some of the best graphics seen in an MMORPG, *Dark Age Of Camelot* creates an atmospheric, engaging and open-ended world. The scale of battles alone should ensure it remains above *EverQuest* for a good few months.

PUB Koch Media DEV Mythic Entertainment  
PCZ ISSUE 112



#### BALDUR'S GATE II

The original *Baldur's Gate* was hailed as one of the best story-driven role-playing games ever. The sequel isn't vastly different, but it's bigger, better and still extremely addictive. An essential for anyone interested in PC role-playing.

PUB Interplay DEV Bioware  
PCZ ISSUE 96



#### THRONE OF DARKNESS

An enjoyable party-based strategic hack 'n' slash from the developers of *Diablo* sees you take command of seven samurai as they fight their way through feudal Japan. Not for everyone, granted, but worth a look.

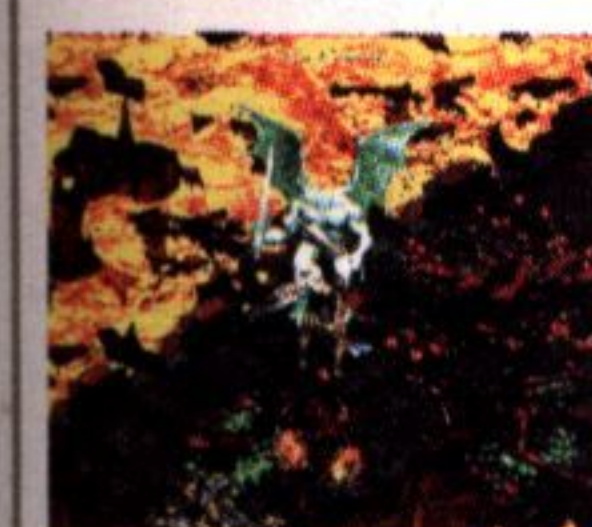
PUB Vivendi DEV Click Entertainment  
PCZ ISSUE 96



#### FREEDOM FORCE

Control your own group of superheroes in this immersive and fully destructible comic book world. It may not be the most sophisticated and bearded of RPGs, but *Freedom Force* is unadulterated bubble-gum fun at its best.

PUB EA DEV Irrational Games  
PCZ ISSUE 115



#### DIABLO II

The sequel to the definitive hack 'n' slash took all the qualities of the original into a massive world of beautifully simplistic yet compelling gameplay. With a huge online community and an excellent expansion, *DII* is as addictive as ever.

PUB VU Games DEV Blizzard  
PCZ ISSUE 84

## ◀ ACTION/ADVENTURE ▶

### GRIM FANDANGO



If you've followed the successes of LucasArts from the early days of *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, this is a must-buy. The comic interaction between Manny and Glottis is a high watermark for scripting in games, while sublime graphics and laugh-out-loud humour ensure it's at the top of its genre. A word of warning though: it's bloody hard and if your mind doesn't work laterally you'll be playing it until the day you die.

PUB Activision DEV LucasArts  
PCZ ISSUE 71



#### SOUL REAVER 2

While this latest episode in the saga of Raziel takes few risks with the action/adventure formula, it's a consummately constructed example of the genre, with a compelling storyline, satisfying combat and excellent puzzle dynamics.

PUB Eidos DEV Crystal Dynamics  
PCZ ISSUE 111



#### DISCWORD NOIR

Although the point-and-click adventure game is dying, *Discworld Noir* is still very much alive. It's darker in style than previous *Discworld* games and all the better for it in our opinion.

PUB Infogrames DEV Perfect Entertainment  
PCZ ISSUE 79



#### SEVERANCE: BLADE OF DARKNESS

Anyone who doesn't mind being splattered with the kind of gore rarely seen outside *Soldier Of Fortune* will find much to like in *Severance*. But it stands out from the usual hack 'n' slasher with its amazing engine and combo system.

PUB Codemasters DEV Rebel Act Studios  
PCZ ISSUE 98



#### THE NOMAD SOUL

Distinctly odd, but original nonetheless. *The Nomad Soul* is a huge intricate world populated by lap dancers and David Bowie. At turns adventure, beat 'em up and platformer, it's insanely ambitious and almost pulls it off.

PUB Eidos DEV Quantic Dream  
PCZ ISSUE 83



#### HITMAN: CODENAME 47

Reminiscent of *Leon* and *Day Of The Jackal*, *Hitman* recreates the excitement of carrying out a contract killing. Snipe from rooftops, disguise yourself in your victims' uniforms and walk away from explosions with calm elegance.

PUB Eidos DEV IO Interactive  
PCZ ISSUE 98



#### PROJECT EDEN

Giving you control of four variously skilled operatives in a nightmarish future metropolis, *Eden* is at once predictable and innovative. The combat and AI may be dull, but the varied puzzles and raft of cool gadgetry make up for it.

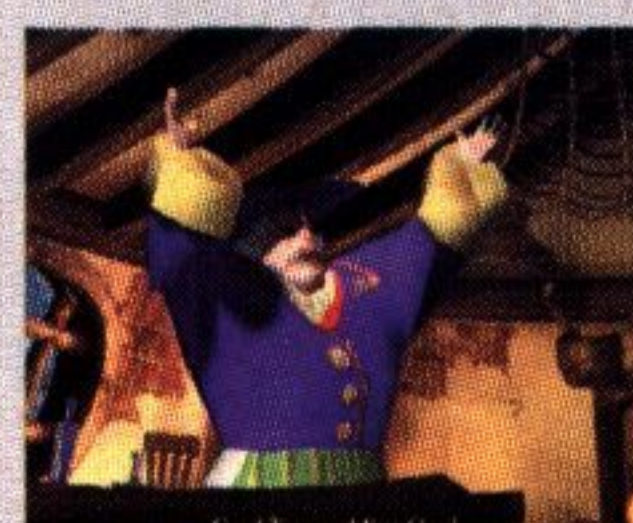
PUB Eidos DEV Core Design  
PCZ ISSUE 107



#### INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

LucasArts moves away from the point-and-click genre and into *Tomb Raider* territory for its latest Indy game, but with many of the adventure elements still in place. The result is surprisingly good, but not for traditionalists.

PUB Activision DEV LucasArts  
PCZ ISSUE 84



#### ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND

One of the hardest things to do in a game is to make your audience laugh with you rather than at you, and *Escape From Monkey Island* is undoubtedly one of the most genuinely funny games to come out in recent years.

PUB Activision DEV LucasArts  
PCZ ISSUE 98



#### METAL GEAR SOLID

Although it's been ported pretty much identically from the console version (with a few graphical improvements), *MGS*'s tense gameplay, well-designed levels and variety of challenging bosses make it a thing of beauty.

PUB Microsoft DEV Konami  
PCZ ISSUE 96



## ◀ GOD GAMES ▶

## BLACK & WHITE



Although it had its critics we still stand by our original verdict. Peter Molyneux's vision is pure and the design of the game both breaks boundaries and serves as a blueprint for the future. The add-on *Creature Isle* is also available, which cuts down on micro-management and lets you guide your creature through a variety of mini-games. Overall we think it's pure genius in a box.

**PUB** EA **DEV** Lionhead Studios  
**PCZ** ISSUE 100



### CIVILIZATION III

*Civilization III* sticks to the same compulsive gameplay that made the first two games so popular. Die-hard *Civ* fans will relish the improved visuals and animation, while the new user-friendly interface makes the game accessible to the first-timer. Brings to mind the maxim 'if it ain't broke...'

**PUB** Infogrames **DEV** Firaxis Games

**PCZ** ISSUE 111



### THE SIMS

Revolutionary at birth, the concept has since been diluted through numerous add-ons and an unhealthy long stay in the charts. It's now little more than a cash cow for Electronic Arts, but you can't help but admire the strength of community and the fact that it's still selling by the bucketload.

**PUB** EA **DEV** Maxis/EA

**PCZ** ISSUE 87



### CAESAR III

Starting from scratch, you've got to build a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious life for your citizens by balancing their work, health and entertainment needs. So what? So it's probably one of the most utterly absorbing and addictive god sims in existence. Hail Caesar.

**PUB** VU Games **DEV** Impressions

**PCZ** ISSUE 70



### SIMCITY 3000

Ten years on, the offspring of the original building game *SimCity* still remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and new addicts alike.

**PUB** EA **DEV** Maxis

**PCZ** ISSUE 74



### ZEUS: MASTER OF OLYMPUS

Straight from the creators of *Pharaoh* and *Caesar III* comes this intricate yet hugely playable micro-management god game. Despite its slightly cartoonish look *Zeus* is highly addictive, but suffers slightly from its lack of multiplayer options and an undeveloped combat system.

**PUB** VU Games **DEV** Impressions Games

**PCZ** ISSUE 97

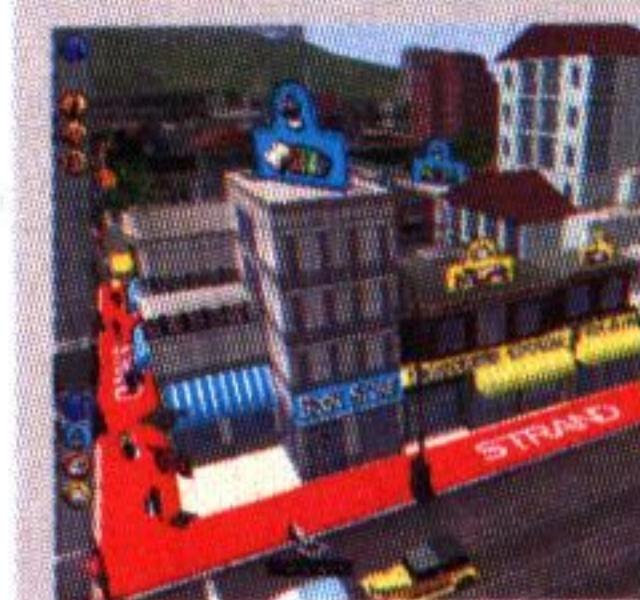


### ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

Design and build your own theme park and then pack it full of the most fiendish rides your imagination can conjure up, while trying to keep the cash and the punters coming in. From rickety wooden dippers to *Nemesis*-style, white-knuckle gurners, *RollerCoaster Tycoon* is hugely addictive. Be warned.

**PUB** Infogrames **DEV** Chris Sawyer

**PCZ** ISSUE 75



### MONOPOLY TYCOON

This mixture of the classic board game and a *Theme Park/SimCity*-style building sim is an admirable attempt at something a little different. Played in real-time, the aim is to make as much money as possible. Great fun for a while, but it quickly becomes repetitive.

**PUB** Infogrames **DEV** Deep Red

**PCZ** ISSUE 110

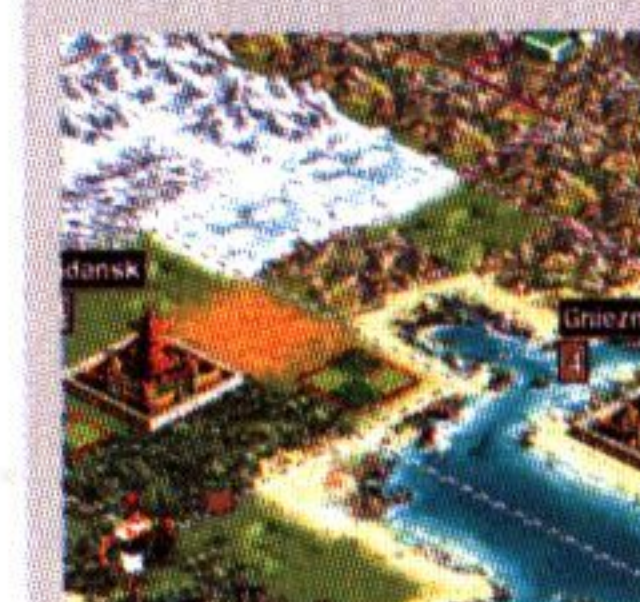


### DUNGEON KEEPER 2

The ultimate 'it's good to be bad' game, *Dungeon Keeper* was a great idea and *DK2* takes the essence and humour of the original, corrects all the mistakes, vastly improves the graphics, and adds a myriad of new features that build wisely on the original concept.

**PUB** EA **DEV** Bullfrog

**PCZ** ISSUE 79



### CALL TO POWER II

It might not have the official endorsement, but *Call To Power II* is a spiritual successor to one of the greatest strategy games of all time, *Civilization II*. The gameplay is familiar but every element has been polished and the result is a hugely challenging and rewarding experience. It's still well worth seeking out.

**PUB** Activision **DEV** Activision

**PCZ** ISSUE 98

## ◀ 3D ACTION / STRATEGY ▶

## OPERATION FLASHPOINT GOLD



Now available with the tricky Red Hammer add-on, *Flashpoint* has become to tactical action what *Half-Life* was to shooters. Fight on foot or in tanks, fly planes or even direct an entire platoon, this game is total war – in your face and on a massive scale. The graphics are an acquired taste, but they convey a sense of wide-open warfare perfectly. It's the ultimate military simulation, with a stunning atmosphere and superb missions.

**PUB** Codemasters **DEV** Bohemia Interactive

**PCZ** ISSUE 104



### GHOST RECON

A superb squad-based shooter, which masterfully combines tactics and action. The levels range from wide-open landscapes to claustrophobic city streets, in what is a stunning evocation of special forces warfare.

**PUB** Ubi Soft **DEV** Red Storm Entertainment

**PCZ** ISSUE 110



### HIDDEN & DANGEROUS DELUXE

With new graphics but most of the original bugs intact, *Hidden & Dangerous Deluxe* is still a great WWII game, featuring some incredibly varied levels and a stirring soundtrack. If you haven't played it yet this is your chance.

**PUB** Take 2 **DEV** Illusion Softworks

**PCZ** ISSUE 79



### HOSTILE WATERS

A brilliant RTS/action game you can play purely strategically or up close and personal. Inspired by the 16-bit classic *Carrier Command*, it's just a shame there aren't any multiplayer options.

**PUB** Rage **DEV** Rage Software

**PCZ** ISSUE 101



### GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

This mammoth and original 3D action/strategy game includes RTS, RPG, real-time and third-person shooter combat elements. It's also rather funny and features near-naked women with blue skin.

**PUB** Interplay **DEV** Planet Moon Studios

**PCZ** ISSUE 95

## ◀ MULTIPLAYER MODS ▶

## COUNTER-STRIKE



*Counter-Strike* is the game that has completely dominated the online world for more than a year now, and its popularity still shows absolutely no sign of abating. With more servers in more countries than any other mod and a totally dedicated army of fans, *Counter-Strike* has really proved that bedroom coding is alive and well and is in better health than it ever has been.

**WEB** [www.counter-strike.net](http://www.counter-strike.net)

**PCZ** ISSUE 109



### DAY OF DEFEAT

Currently in its second beta, this WWII-themed game is being played by more people online than both *Medal Of Honor* and *Wolfenstein*. It's atmospheric, highly realistic and superbly designed.

**WEB** [www.dayofdefeatmod.com](http://www.dayofdefeatmod.com)

**PCZ** Issue 115



### TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC

A great squad-based action game with nine classes, a wide variety of weaponry and many map variations. The action focuses on infiltrating enemy bases, and the frantic gameplay requires more manual dexterity than most.

**WEB** <http://www.planethalflife.com/tfc>

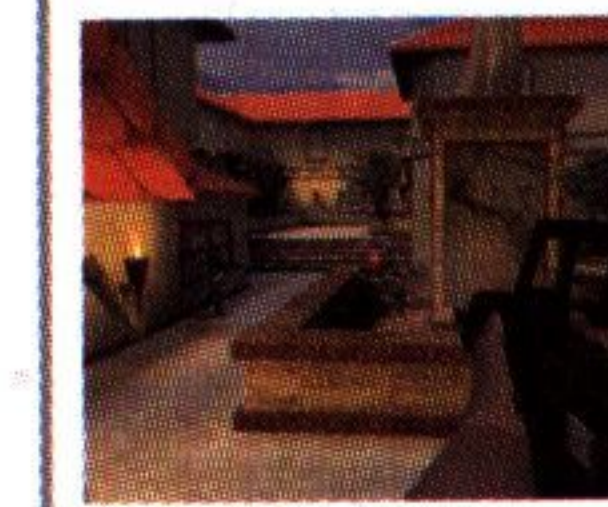


### STRIKE FORCE

Hot on the heels of *Counter-Strike* comes this superb total conversion mod for *Unreal Tournament*. It boasts outstanding maps and attention to detail, including heartbeat monitors that measure stress and infrared laser dot aiming.

**WEB** [www.strikeforcecenter.com](http://www.strikeforcecenter.com)

**PCZ** Issue 109



### JAILBREAK: POW

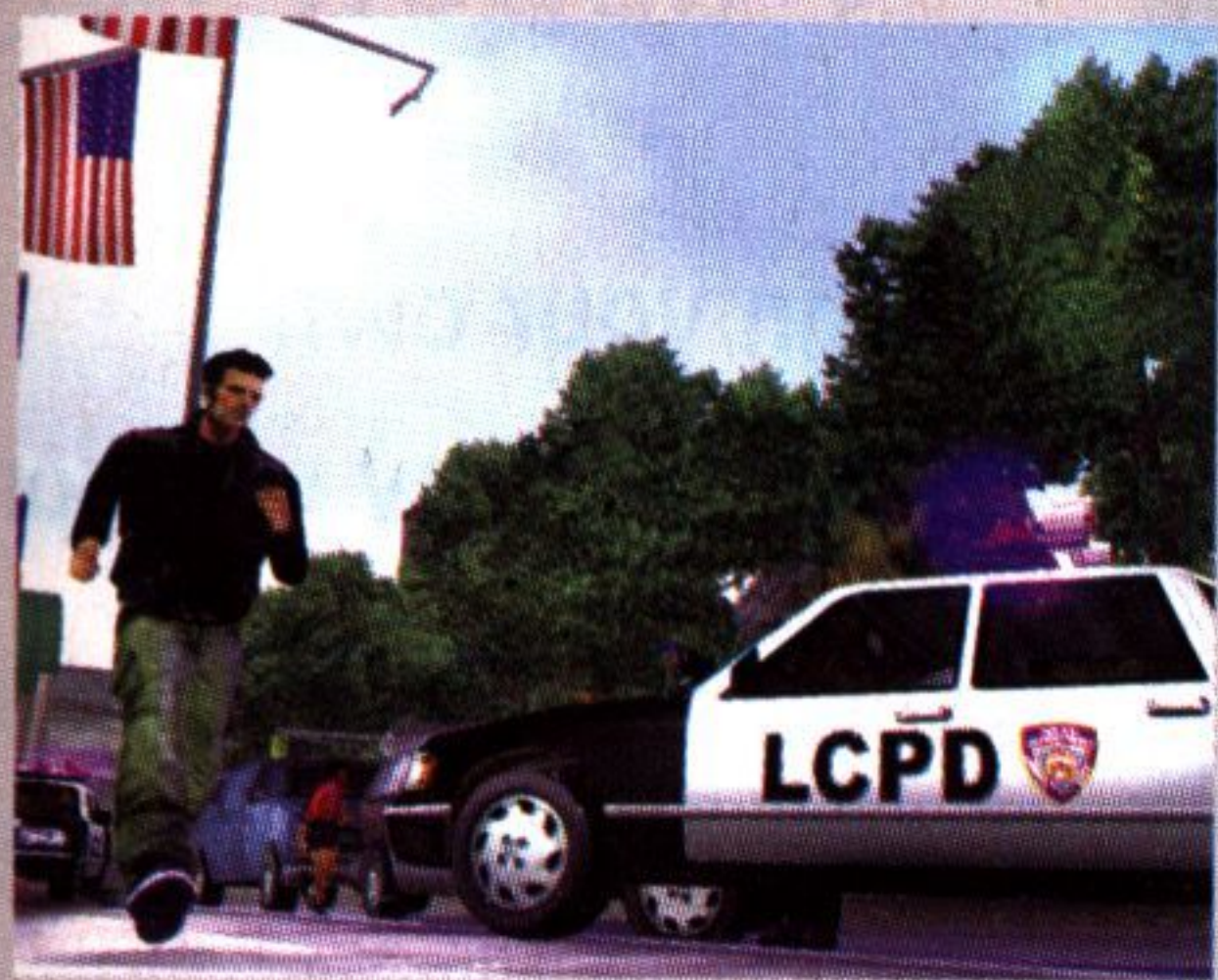
Two sides, two jails and a lot of fun. If you get fragged you get jailed and you have to stay until you're released. When all the team is in jail you get executed. All-in-all, one of the best *QIII* mods available.

**WEB** [www.planetquake.com/bkp](http://www.planetquake.com/bkp)

**PCZ** Issue 109



## NEW ENTRY GRAND THEFT AUTO III



It may have taken its time getting onto the PC, but *Grand Theft Auto III* was definitely worth the wait. Offering you both traditional linear missions and a wonderfully freeform world ripe for exploring, the game boasts stunning graphics and superb attention to detail. It's a great spin on both the driving and shooting genres and we can assure you that you'll love this noisy orgy of violence and speed. Crime really does pay.

PUB Take 2 DEV Rockstar

PCZ ISSUE 117



### COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2.0

This is still the benchmark rally title and looks set to remain so until *Colin McRae 3.0* appears. The graphics are fantastic, the detail is overwhelming and the cars handle beautifully. So, if you are on the look-out for the definitive rally game, this is it.

PUB Codemasters DEV Codemasters

PCZ ISSUE 98



### RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP XTREME

This equals *Colin McRae Rally 2.0* as the top PC driving game, but the fact that it costs three times as much means it doesn't quite claim the top spot. It plays beautifully and even comes with online options. An essential rally game.

PUB Actualize DEV Actualize

PCZ ISSUE 110



### MIDTOWN MADNESS 2

Buckle up for some high-speed action as you race around London and San Francisco. The original *MM* was a belter, but with improved cars, races and controls, this is even better. We reckon it's the definitive arcade racer.

PUB Microsoft DEV Angel Studios

PCZ ISSUE 96



### NEW ENTRY F1 2002

This latest edition of *F1* looks and sounds better than ever, with all the latest data, improved AI and even dynamic weather effects. It's not just a brush up on the last one either; as it contains added features, including telemetry for F1 obsessives.

PUB EA DEV Image Space Incorporated

PCZ ISSUE 117

# FLIGHT SIMS

## IL-2 STURMOVIK



Combining incredible atmosphere, sound and visuals with possibly the most realistic flight model to date, *IL-2* puts you behind the flight stick of a number of stunningly reproduced WWII combat planes. The attention to detail is breathtaking and the easy-to-use editor allows endless months of replayability. A must-have for any real combat flight sim fanatic.

PUB Ubi Soft DEV 1C: Maddox Games

PCZ ISSUE 110



### MS FLIGHT SIM 2002

With more polish than previous versions, this professional edition offers players more planes, extra flight loggings and improved graphics. It might not be able to teach you how to fly, but it's the closest you'll get without paying for lessons.

PUB Microsoft DEV BAO

PCZ ISSUE 111



### BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Allow yourself to be immersed in one of the most exciting and realistic combat flight sims around. The action is non-stop, the skies are crowded and the flight models actually feel 'right'. Tally ho!

PUB Empire Interactive DEV Rowan Software

PCZ ISSUE 103



### FALCON 4

We waited patiently for years for this title to arrive, and the good news is that, for once, we weren't disappointed. *Falcon 4* features incredible 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure.

PUB Infogrames DEV Microprose

PCZ ISSUE 72



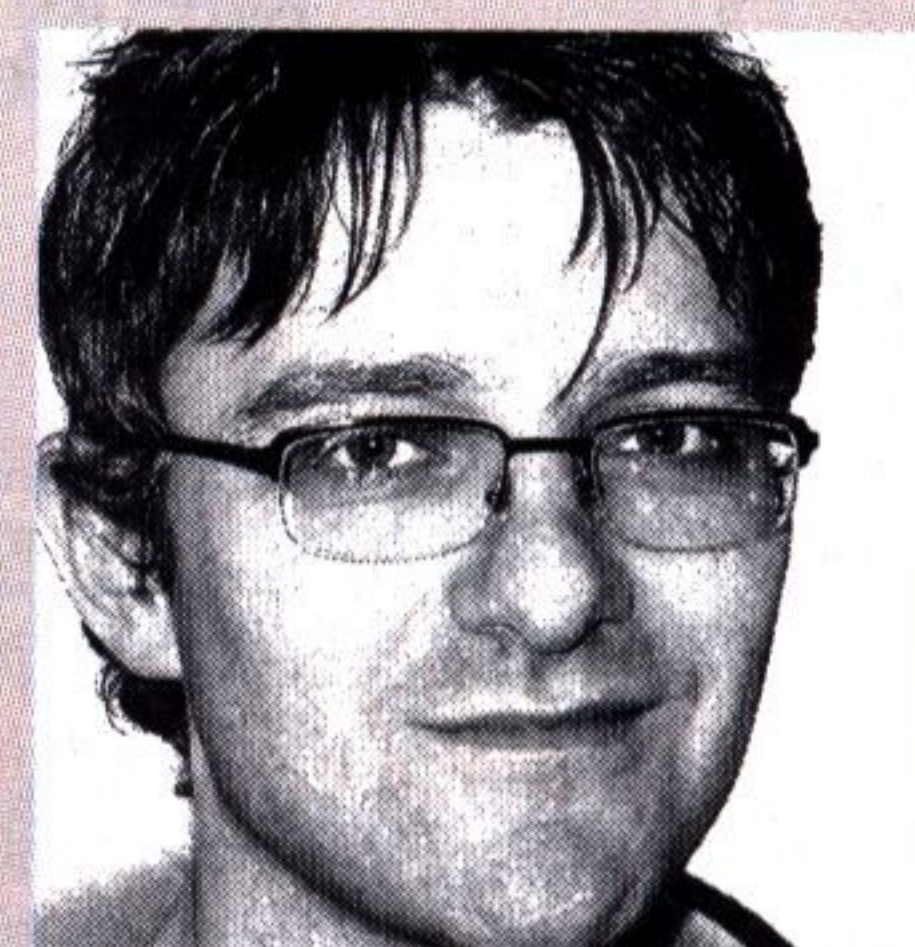
### B-17: THE MIGHTY 8TH

*B-17* reproduces the experience of piloting a World War II bomber. Just about everything is covered, from planning missions to dropping bombs. A must for WWII and realism freaks everywhere.

PUB Infogrames DEV Wayward Simulations

PCZ ISSUE 96

## PC ZONE'S NEW BOY STEVE O'HAGAN GIVES YOU HIS ALL-TIME CLASSIC GAMING FAVOURITES



### LORDS OF MIDNIGHT (SPECTRUM)

As a wide-eyed 10 year-old, this combination of my two favourite things (fantasy and war) was to enrich my life in a way that was not to happen again until, aged 16, a video entitled *Foxy Food Fight* came into my possession. I played it the other week. It was dismal. But back then it was quite simply the best thing I had ever seen.



### DECISION IN THE DESERT (C64)

Anyone who says Westwood invented the RTS is wrong. This came out in 1985 and was both real-time and very strategic. If proof was ever needed of Sid Meier's genius, this is it, even though it came out in the days before his name appeared on the front of the box. No, I'm not just choosing this so I can name-drop and say: "I was there."



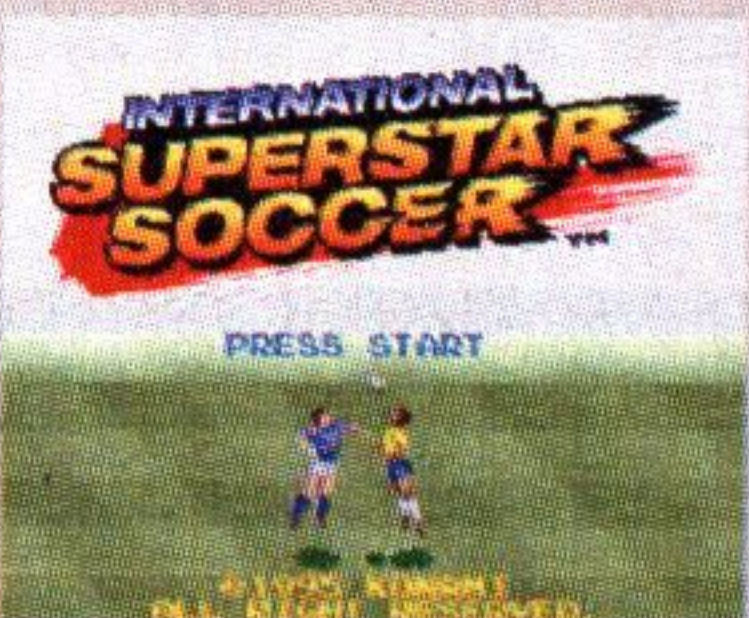
### KICK OFF (AMIGA)

The first football game that really did it for me, coinciding as it did with my 'awakening' to the world of real football. By today's standards, it was insanely hard to play and looked like some weird form of pinball, but nevertheless, oh what a game! OK, it was bettered by *Sensible Soccer*, but this was first.



### MARIO KART (SNES)

Anyone who's never owned a console has really missed out. No, honestly. Of course you read this mag 'cos you are a PC gamer, but one of the biggest downsides to being such a person is missing out on the greatness of Nintendo games, such as this one – the most fun racing game ever. Poor you. ROMs? Never heard of them.



### INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER (SNES)

This let you plug in four controllers and play two-on-two football. Even better, it allowed four of you to play against the computer. My mates and I created a beautiful brand of football, whereby finally, as we guided Wales to the World Cup, you were only allowed to score with a volley, a diving header, a chip, or literally by passing it into the net. Sublime co-operative fun.



### X-COM: TERROR FROM THE DEEP (PC)

While most fans of the series would choose the first one or *Apocalypse*, I'll go for the nautical atmosphere of the second game, primarily on account of the Super-Brained Peckeroids. Why did they have to turn the *X-Com* series into a bunch of crap? Somebody give Julian Gollop a whole load of cash so he can make a new game that's not Play By Email (*Laser Squad Nemesis*).



### CLOSE COMBAT: A BRIDGE TOO FAR (PC)

My favourite RTS. Any of the series bar the first one will do. One of the few in the genre where real tactics play a part as opposed to drawing boxes around huge clumps of troops and then clicking on the enemy. No resource management and a gentle pace mean you can lean back and have a fag while playing too. Or a cup of tea, whatever. Massively underrated.



### STAR CRAFT (PC)

The best designed of the micro-management RTSs. It helped that my mates loved it too, and we played till our heads hurt. Some of us nearly lost girlfriends. Some of us actually lost girlfriends. I gave up when I discovered the hard-fought victory I had just earned was against a seven-year-old Korean child. Does that make me a criminal?



### CIV 2 (PC)

The moment when my tanks rolled into Babylon, crushing the Persian musketeers beneath their treads and claiming the Hanging Gardens for my empire will live long. *Civ 2* allowed you to play out history like it was written in an amphetamine-fuelled Michael Moorcock novel. Stealth Fighters vs chariots and submarines vs galleons. Awesome.



### DUKE NUKEM 3D (PC)


*Doom* was groundbreaking, *Doom 2* was immense and *Hexen* was brilliantly atmospheric. But *Da Dook* was funny, and that was what made this my favourite of the early era FPSs. He was Arnie and Sledgehammer rolled into one. And there were more Super-Brained Peckeroids. They still haunt my dreams. So many fond memories of lapping at broken urinals...



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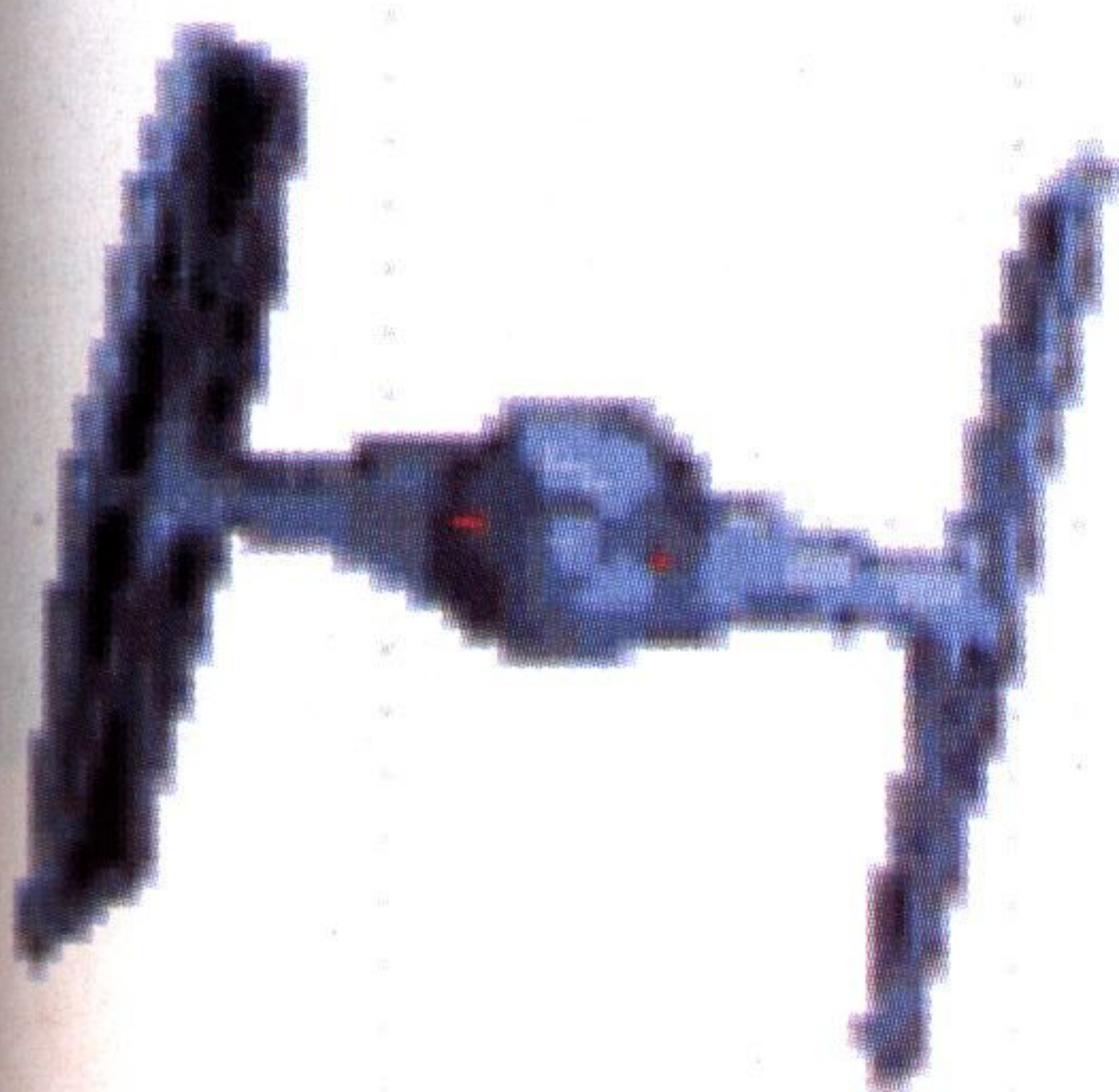
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# RETRO ZONE



Bring back the X-Wings for the next film, George.

## REBEL ASSAULT II

A sequel that doesn't suck? Keith Pullin investigates

**"The original *Rebel Assault* hit the scene just as CDs were being introduced to an innocent world"**

WITH CINEMA audiences worldwide busily yawning through the fifth (or is it second?) in the now irreparably ruined *Star Wars* saga, we hark back to a happier incarnation of the franchise. The original *Rebel Assault* hit the scene just as CDs were being introduced to an innocent world. At the time, the near-video quality images left us agape, even if the gameplay was little more than

standard light-gun style shooting on rails. Didn't matter. It was *Star Wars*, and back then that still really meant something.

The sequel was more of the same only bigger. It still had all that special *Star Wars* magic and we were totally hooked from the moment "A long time ago..." faded up on to the screen. Plot-wise it was pretty much par for the course – the Empire building a top-

secret weapon, and the Rebels being sent to destroy it. All through the medium of more light-gun style shooting on rails.

True, there were some 'flying bits' (basic, *Wing Commander* style swerving and shooting) and plenty of FMV 'moments' to help the atmosphere. But despite a score of 90 in issue 34, it was always going to be a love it or hate it affair. Still, there was always X-Wing or TIE Fighter for fans who wanted a true simulation of space flight (that's true in the 'completely made up by Hollywood' sense, naturally).

*Rebel Assault II* wasn't trying to be a simulation though. It was as close as you could get to having a *Star Wars* film on your PC in '96 and that was good enough for us.



The best spaceship of all time. Period.



This was the meaty bit of the game.



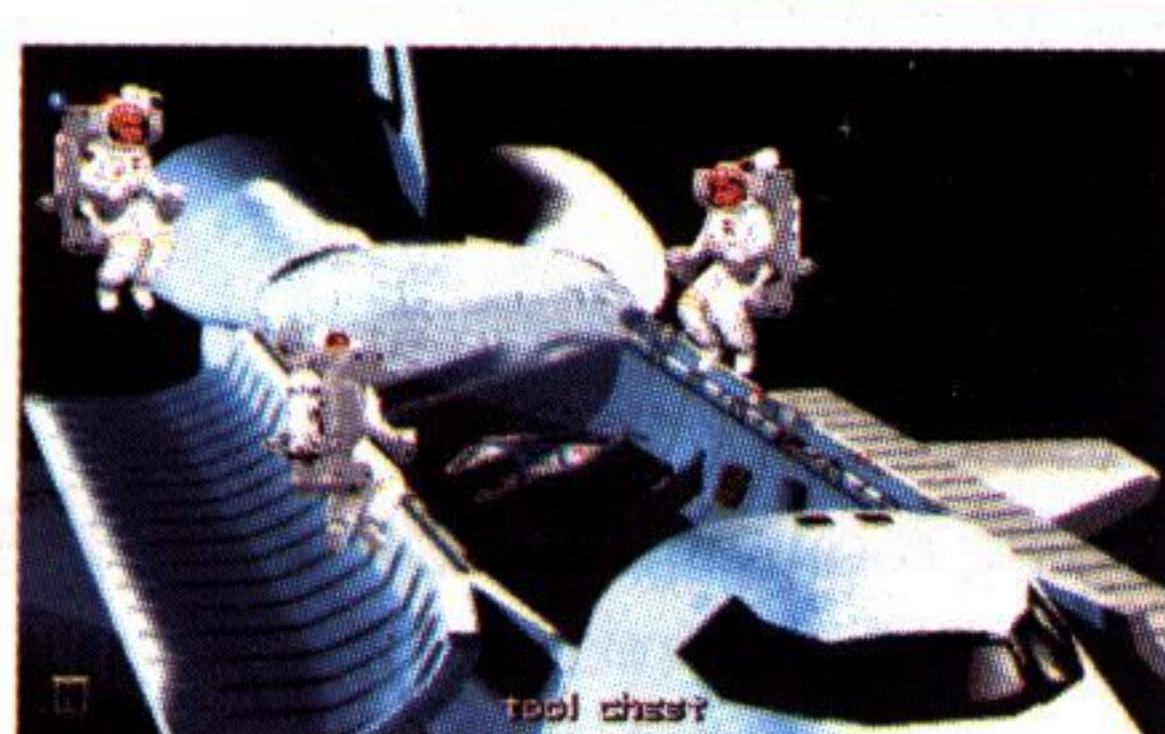
Better than all that Naboo nonsense.

### THE BEST OF THE REST →



#### Actua Soccer (PC)

Easily the best football series ever to appear on the PC (nuts to FIFA), *Actua* may not have had the most realistic looking players, but by god they were fast. *Actua 2* was so beloved by *PC ZONE* that ex-editor Jeremy Wells even took on the entire games industry once... and won.



#### The Dig (PC)

While George Lucas grabbed the top honours this month, his old buddy Steven Spielberg was busy lending his name to a fairly decent LucasArts adventure. In truth, all Spielberg did was come up with the initial concept, but it was none the worse for that. Beginning of a wobbly stage for LucasArts though.



#### Alpine Racer (Arcade)

This signified the birth of the current barrage of 'extreme' winter sports games (why no curling, eh?), *Alpine Racer* was the first coin-op to boast a 50in screen and 'proper' ski controls. Which meant everyone who played it inadvertently wiggled their arse at everyone else in the room. Much fun.



#### Wipeout (PC/PlayStation)

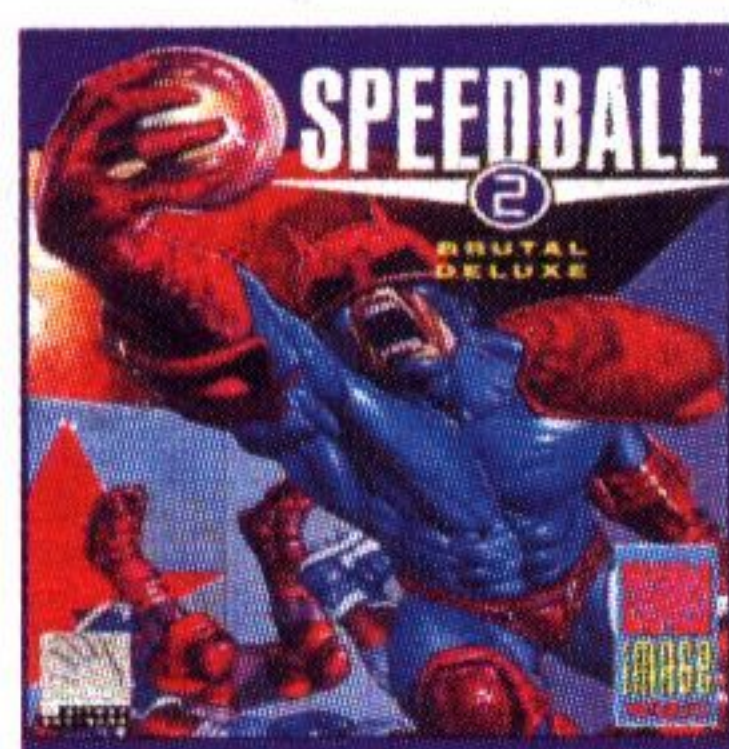
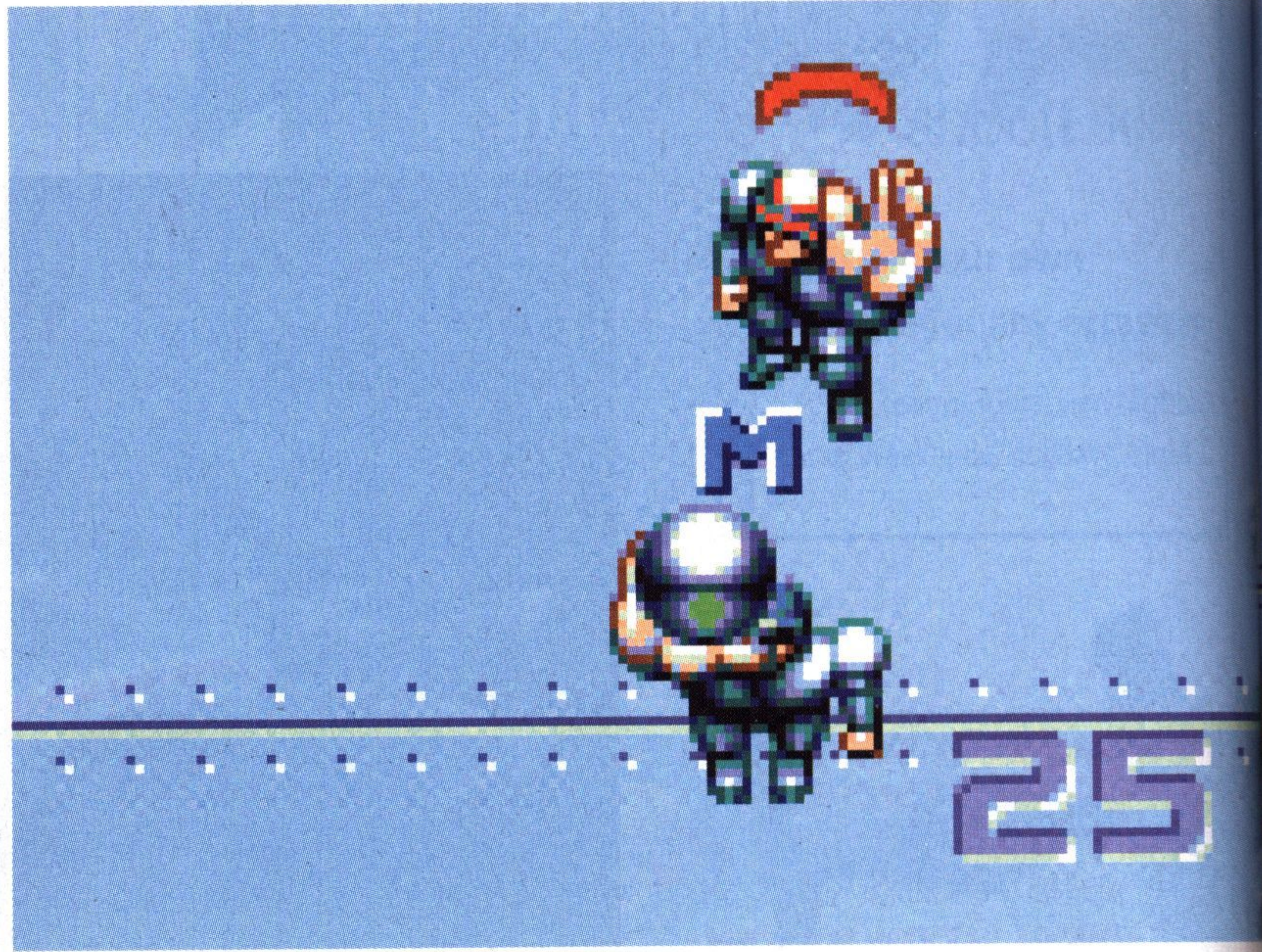
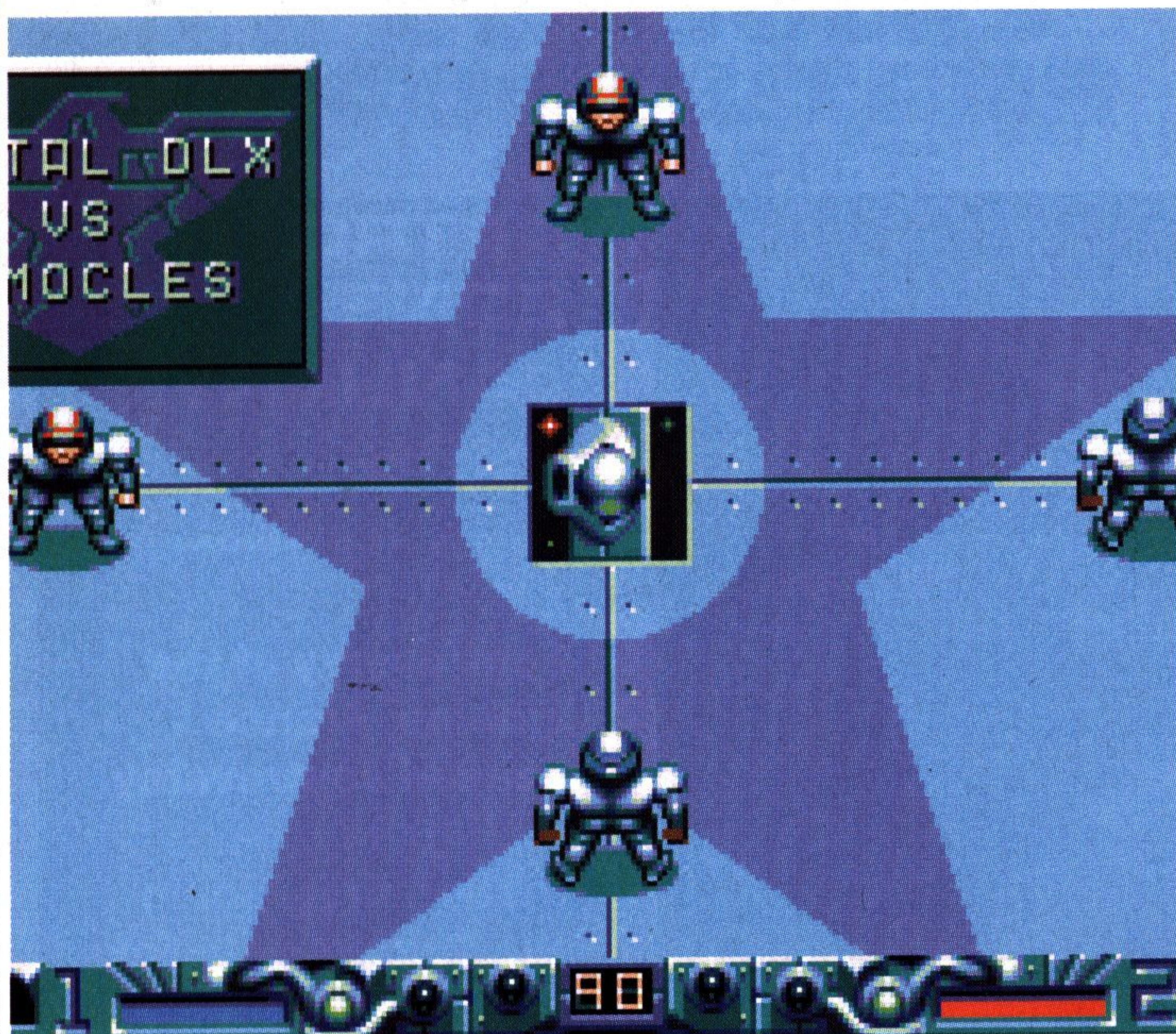
The game that practically single-handedly made gaming 'cool' in the eyes of the outside world, *Wipeout's* unusual grammar belied a scorchingly fast futuristic racing game. Mainly it was the trippy swirl of bright colours that drew in the stoned nightclubbing crowd. The PC version wasn't all that though. Sadly.

### NEWS

#### GAMING NEWS FROM JANUARY 1996

- Debbie 'Blondie' Harry lent her expertise to an FMV-led mystery adventure called *Double Switch*. Big things were expected from US developer Digital Pictures, but we never saw anything else from anyone involved. Except Harry who now does gardening on TV (or is that Kim Wilde?).
- Atari returned with a pre-CES (E3's forerunner) announcement of Atari Interactive by CEO Ted Hoff. The first game was set to be *Jeff Minter's Tempest 3000* – a reworking of the classic shooter. But eight days later, Hoff quit, Atari Interactive was up for sale and Minter returned to his llamas.





## GAMES THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

# SPEEDBALL 2: BRUTAL DELUXE

Not every game creates its own genre, fewer still maintain that genre's benchmark for more than a decade. **Paul Presley** dons the rose-tinted Bitmap shades of nostalgia, and examines the game that helped put 'Britsoft' on the map

**GAME** Speedball 2

**DEVELOPER** The Bitmap Brothers

**RELEASED** Early 1991

**INFLUENCED** Sensible Soccer (and therefore most modern footie games), as well as every violent future sports game going

**BACK IN THE** late '80s, the era known to industry veterans as The Golden Age of Gaming, few games could ever have claimed to be as exquisitely well balanced as the futuristic sports phenomenon that was *Speedball*. There wasn't a single thing wrong with it, from pace to control to content. To look at *Speedball* was to witness a game that had surely spent countless months being debated in development meetings, having had every nuance tweaked and tested until they were perfect. Well, not quite.

"We all went down the pub one afternoon and designed *Speedball* on the back of a packet of Silk Cut," reveals Mike Montgomery. Montgomery was one of the three founders of the legendary Bitmap

Brothers, and the "we" in question refers to himself, Steve Kelly and Eric Matthews.

"Mastertronic asked us to do a game based on real tennis," he remembers. "Eric did a hell of a lot of research into it and we took it all back to them only for them to change their mind. It's a real downer when you're first starting to have someone promise a load of work only to have it taken away again."

"Real tennis is played on a tennis court but you can hit the ball up and across all these sloping roofs all around you," says Matthews about the project. "So lots of things came into that basic idea: football, contact sports, the use of goals. It all went into the mix, then we skewed it towards the future and added a

whole *Rollerball* thing, a physical violence element with cool characters and so on."

As Montgomery adds: "We just thought there were too many bloody rules in the thing. We wanted to invent a sports game that wasn't so complicated."

## PROFILES

The coolest of the cool, the flashest of the flash. The Bitmaps were 16-bit legends in their own lifetimes. But every great rock group eventually splits. Here's where they are now.



**NAME** Eric Matthews

**ROLE ON SPEEDBALL**

Creator and designer

**NOW DOING** Big cheese at Sony's European Prototype department.



**NAME** Mike Montgomery

**ROLE ON SPEEDBALL**

Co-designer and coder

**NOW DOING** Still leading the Bitmaps, with games such as *Speedball Arena*.



**NAME** Dan Malone

**ROLE ON SPEEDBALL:** Graphic Artist

**NOW DOING:** Freelance graphic design for handheld platforms, including the GBA version of *Harry Potter*.

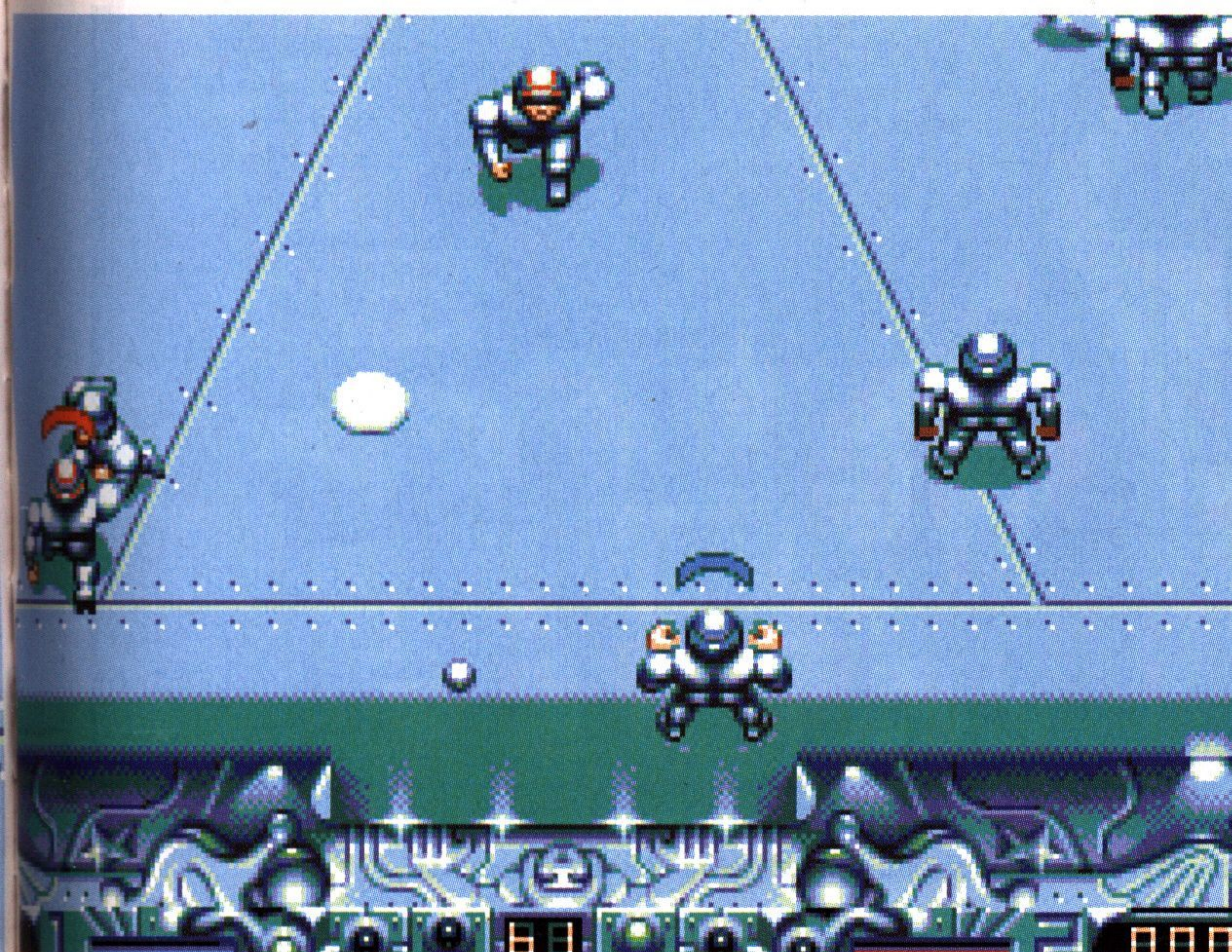
**"We all went down the pub one afternoon and designed *Speedball* on the back of a packet of Silk Cut"**

**MIKE MONTGOMERY**

CO-DESIGNER AND CODER, SPEEDBALL 2







## HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

So it was, that in the later months of 1988 that the original *Speedball* was born. Judged by what was to follow, it could be seen as a pretty basic affair. A simplistic top-down affair on a pretty limited vertically scrolling pitch. Five-a-side, two goals and a couple of bounce domes. But the gameplay was there in spades. It took a while for the Bitmaps to find a publisher but eventually Mirrorsoft took the risk and the fledgling developers never looked back.

"We didn't get an office until after the Mirrorsoft deal," says Matthews. "*Speedball* was all done from Steve's house where he'd have this big chart on the wall which was basically the pitch with all the players marked out on that. It was all worked out on the walls and floor with bits of paper. Terribly sophisticated."

Luckily the game hit the big time, far bigger than anyone had been expecting. With *Speedball* finished, the team started to grow and began work on other projects, such as a sequel to their first ever game, the hit shoot 'em up *Xenon*. Although there was never any real

intention to write a *Speedball* follow-up, the concept was never far from their minds. "There was always a sense that there was more to be done with the game," says Matthews.

"Like most things," muses Montgomery, "when you start writing games, you get them up to the highest level of technology you can in the time allowed, because everything's done to a budget – not that we took much notice of budgets and stuff. But you always feel as though you can do much better, so it was nice to have the opportunity to have another go at it."

## BRUTAL DELUXE

With the decision to make a sequel confirmed, work began at the end of 1989. The original team had grown somewhat since then and with Mark Coleman, the original's artist, still working out of his house somewhere in Wales, a new eye was brought in to give *Speedball 2* its visual style.

"I was given a bit of a freehand visually," says Dan Malone of his first job with the team. "The main thing was that we were changing the viewing angle from the first game, trying to show as much of the player as possible rather than the straight top-down view. That was the only real stipulation. Not quite isometric but a sort of forced perspective."

*Speedball 2* was to be a sequel in the truest sense of the world. Bigger, faster and better than the original, while still retaining the basic concept and well-balanced gameplay. For Matthews this meant opening the pitch beyond the basic vertically scrolling arena of the original.

"In *Speedball* you could almost just throw the ball from one end of the pitch to the other," he says. "*Speedball 2* added that sense of really working your way into the other player's half that you get in sports like football."





That really powerful emotion you get when running with the player and making passes."

"Obviously we wanted more pitch features than there were in *Speedball*," continues Malone, "and so it was just a case of doodling some ideas out and sticking them in, seeing if they worked. It was mainly just trial and error. There was talk of having the bounce pins moving for instance, but that didn't really work."

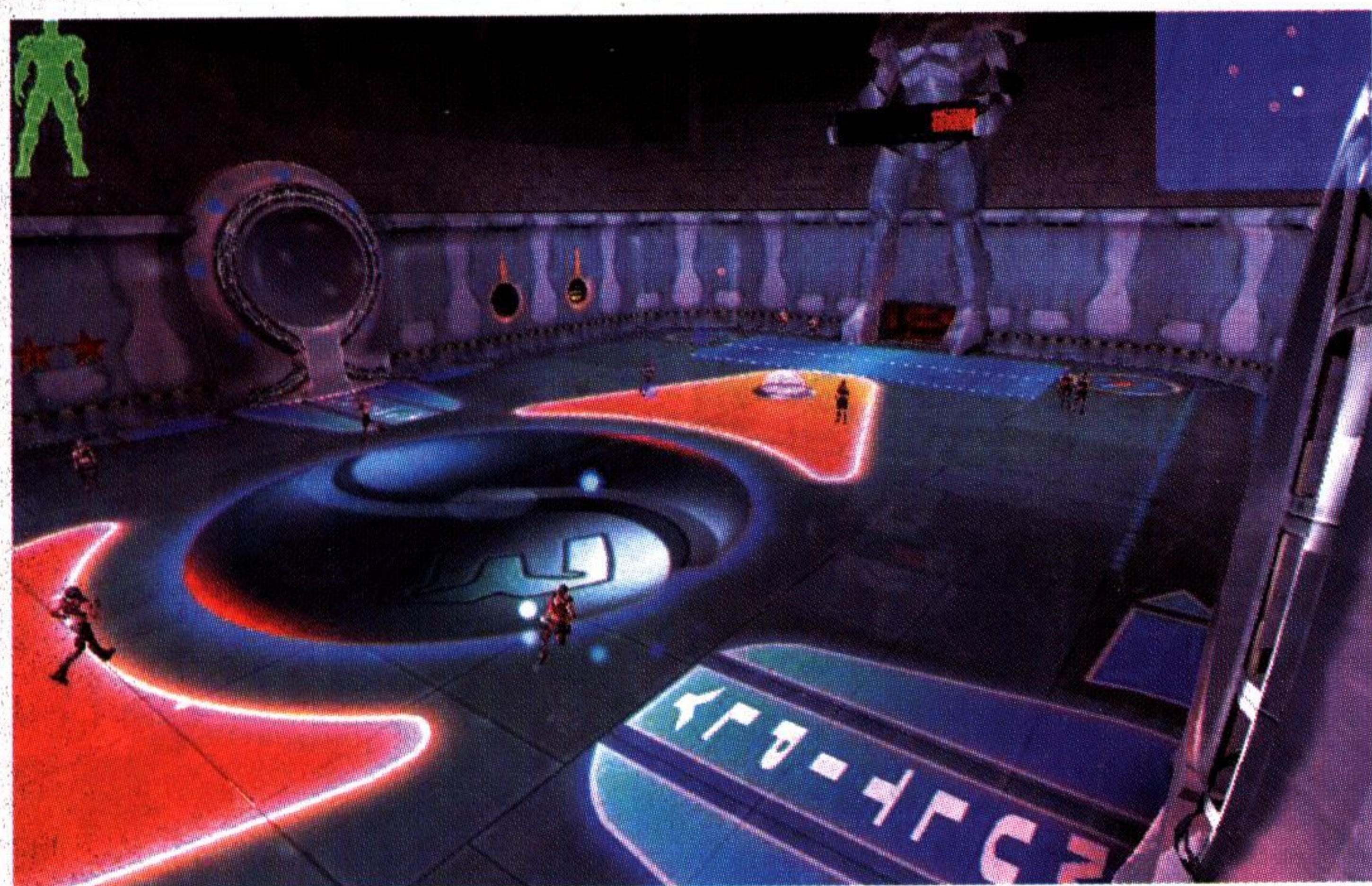
### FUN AND GAMES

What resulted was one of the finest sports games ever to appear on a computer. The first appearance of eight-way scrolling – vertically, horizontally and diagonally – a host of power-up options with effects such as freezing your opponents or reversing their joystick, and the addition of alternative scoring options such as



The defining moment of *Speedball 2*: knocking out an opponent and watching him leave the pitch.

### THE FUTURE: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



### BENEFACTOR WITH DEEP POCKETS NEEDED

Despite the lasting success of *Speedball*, there hasn't really been much more to add to the floundering genre of future sports – unless you're willing to count games such as *Unreal Tournament* (which we don't). Both Matthews and Montgomery are in no doubt as to why.

"If you went to most publishers now and said you wanted to write a future sports game they'd say they weren't interested," explains Matthews wearily. "It's because they're not familiar. If you look at current gaming trends you're seeing a return to contemporary, realistic environments or historical ones. The future is difficult to sell."

Montgomery agrees: "I think there'd be a lot more 'future sports' games if publishers actually believed in future sports games. They don't. They all want realistic football games and stuff like that. There's a lot of talent out there that could actually probably write futuristic sports games and really enjoy it. Unfortunately people have tried to copy *Speedball* and failed, so maybe it will only ever be a one-off."

There are attempts in the works though. *Proball* is a fun *Quake III* mod that captured the attention of the *ZONE* office about a year ago. It's still out there though (see this month's Supertest on page 90), and the limited number of servers do still attract players. Meanwhile *Deathrow* is a Swedish title heading to the Xbox, which mixes *Speedball* with all those ninja-kicking games that console types seem to love so much.

But what of the original? Aside from the GBA version of *Speedball 2*, due out in August, the Bitmaps have done a sizeable amount of work on *Speedball Arena* – the name being given to the all-3D 21st-century update. Unfortunately there's a small fly in the ointment. "We're still looking for a publisher for it," he explains. "We haven't stopped work on it, but we have slowed down as there are several other projects we need to do more immediate work on. We've had a few offers but they haven't been right, so it's a case of finding the right publisher for us. It's fair to say that from whenever we get started again, we'll be 15 months away from finishing it."

Anyone with a couple of million in the bank and a willingness to take a risk on a classic should get in touch.

the stars and multipliers. The press took to it immediately, showering the Bitmaps with more awards than they could carry and positive reviews appeared everywhere. More importantly though, the public loved it. "It was

"We had office tournaments as we'd always be playing it and testing it," remembers Malone. "It's great when that happens on a game and there was a lot of that going on." So who was the office champ? No argument on that one.

**"Magazine journalists in particular seemed to be pretty good at it, so we took great pleasure in beating them"**

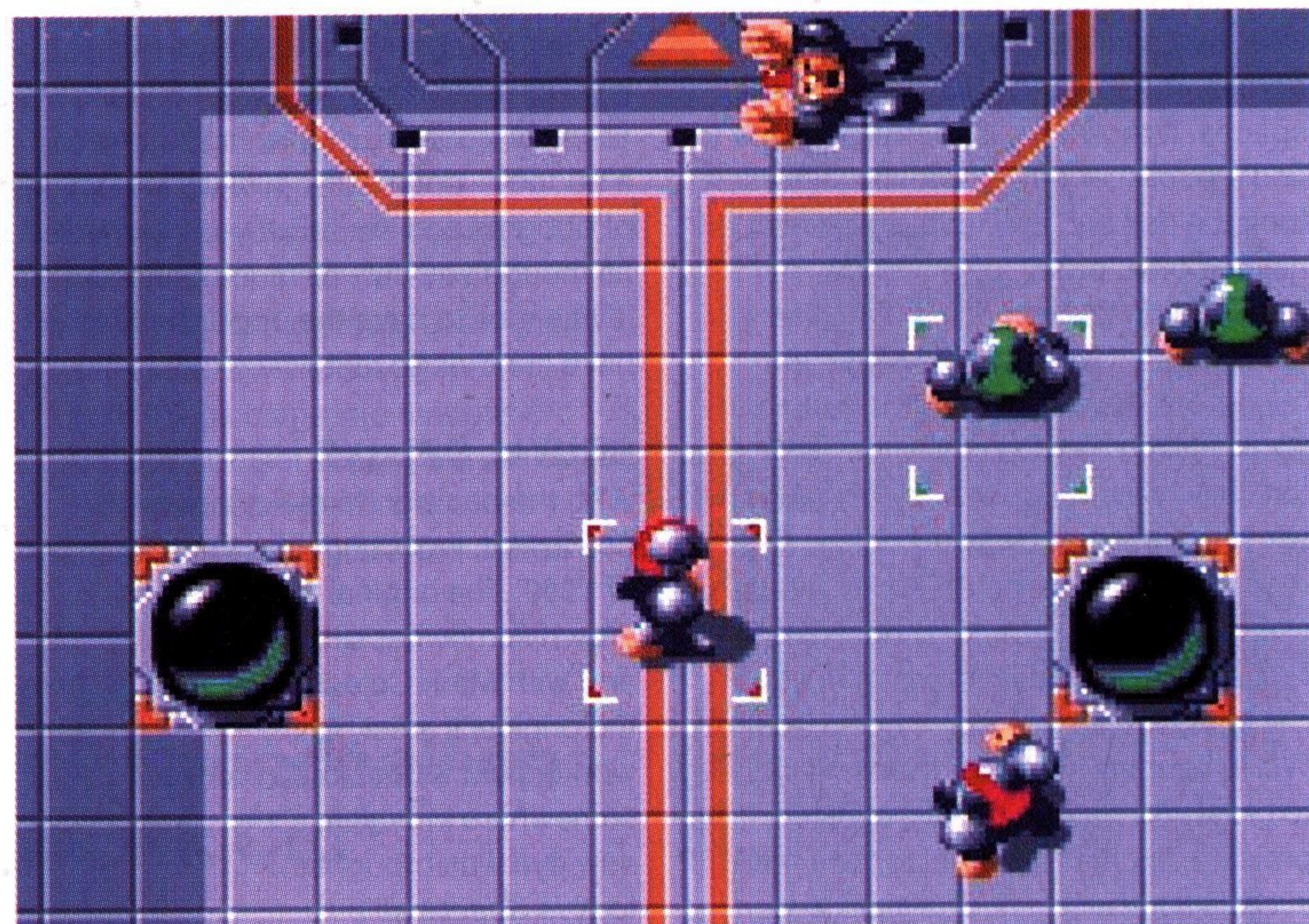
**ERIC MATTHEWS**  
CREATOR AND DESIGNER, SPEEDBALL 2

probably the second most successful game the Bitmaps ever did," says Matthews. Montgomery agrees: "The *Speedball* franchise set the Bitmaps up, and *Speedball 2* was probably our best product."

Were the team able to enjoy the game themselves though? Would spending so much time creating it lead to utter boredom when asked to play it? "Let's put it this way," grins Montgomery, "we got through so many joysticks playing it in the office that we had to get a hardware sponsor in the end. We used to get through cases of them."

"Eric was the best, definitely," claim both Montgomery and Malone.

"Yeah, I was pretty good at it," admits Matthews quite modestly. "I remember having to turn up at various games magazines so people could challenge me, which was always scary because there were some people out there who were really good at it. Magazine journalists in particular seemed to be pretty good at it, so we took great pleasure in beating them. I particularly remember kicking Stuart Campbell up in the air once. That was pretty good."

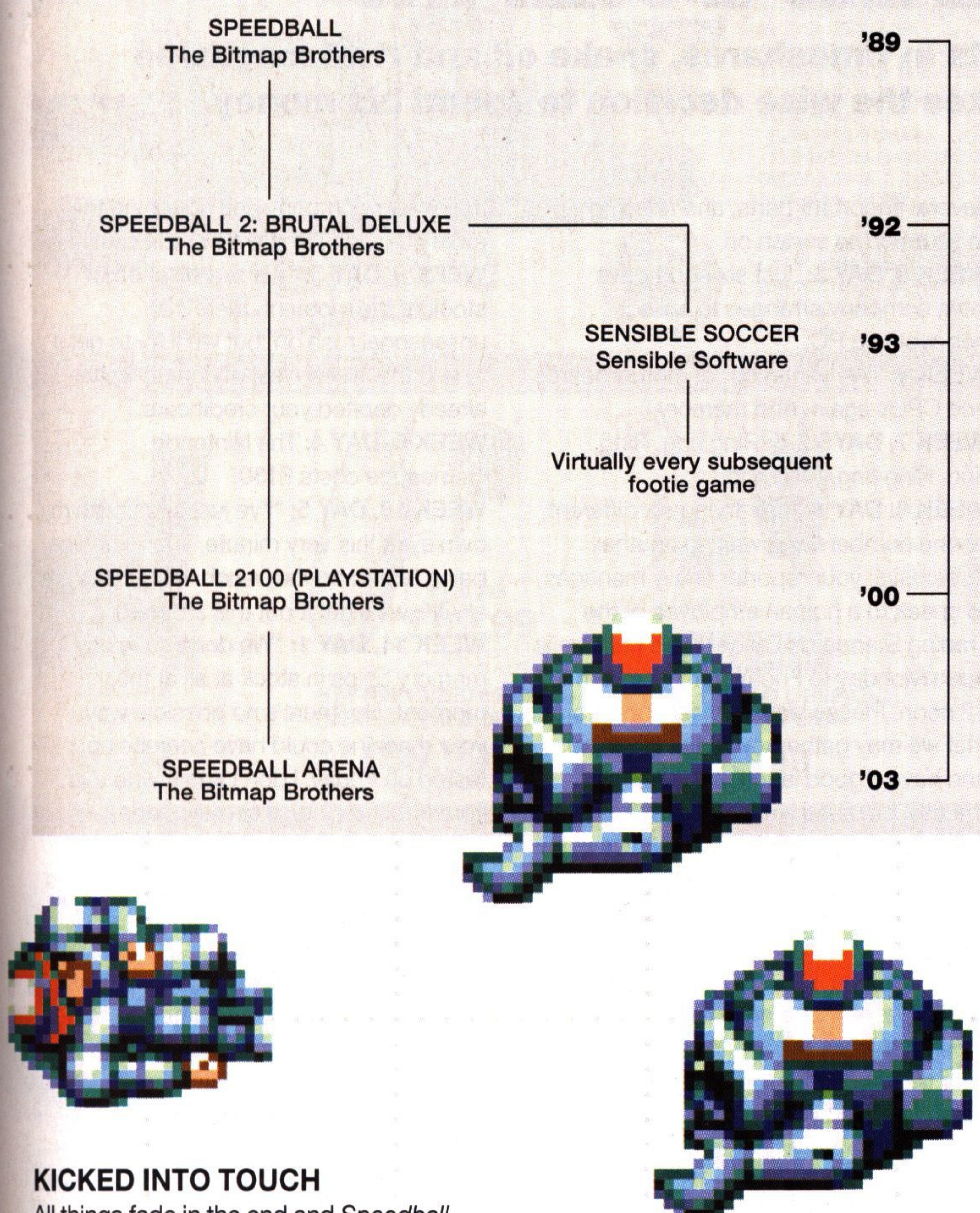


The cat prepares to make another flying save.



## SPEEDBALL: BRUTAL DELUXE AND BEYOND

With *Speedball* being so recognisable and such a hit, there have been few direct descendants. But influences can be subtle and have more long-reaching effects as this family tree shows...



Collectively we think *Speedball 2* is one of the best games ever.

### KICKED INTO TOUCH

All things fade in the end and *Speedball* was no exception. As the team continued to grow, attention turned to other projects: *Magic Pockets*, *Cadaver*, the *Chaos Engine* series, *Z*. Eventually the original team drifted into other areas and that seemed to signal an end for the Bitmaps. Indeed almost seven years passed before they made a return to the gaming world with the sci-fi RTS romp, *Z: Legends* never die though, and the legacy of what the team achieved with *Speedball* continued to filter through the rest of the industry,

"*Speedball* probably made football games better because they all had to compete with us," reflects Montgomery. "We're friends with the Sensible guys who made *Sensible Soccer* which is probably one of the best football games ever. Whether *Sensi* was influenced by us I don't know. I'll have to ask them next time we meet," he laughs.

Matthews is more confident about it. "If you ask Jon Hare [founder of Sensible Software] what his main

**"*Speedball* probably made football games better because they all had to compete with us"**

**MIKE MONTGOMERY**  
CO-DESIGNER AND CODER, *SPEEDBALL 2*

influences were for *Sensi Soccer*, he'll freely admit they were *Kick Off* and *Speedball 2*," he says. "As a result I think we probably influenced a lot of other games in a weird, indirect way."

No one was ever able to directly compete though. "Many people have just tried to copy us and failed," warns Montgomery. "Only *Speedball* is *Speedball* really." **[E]**

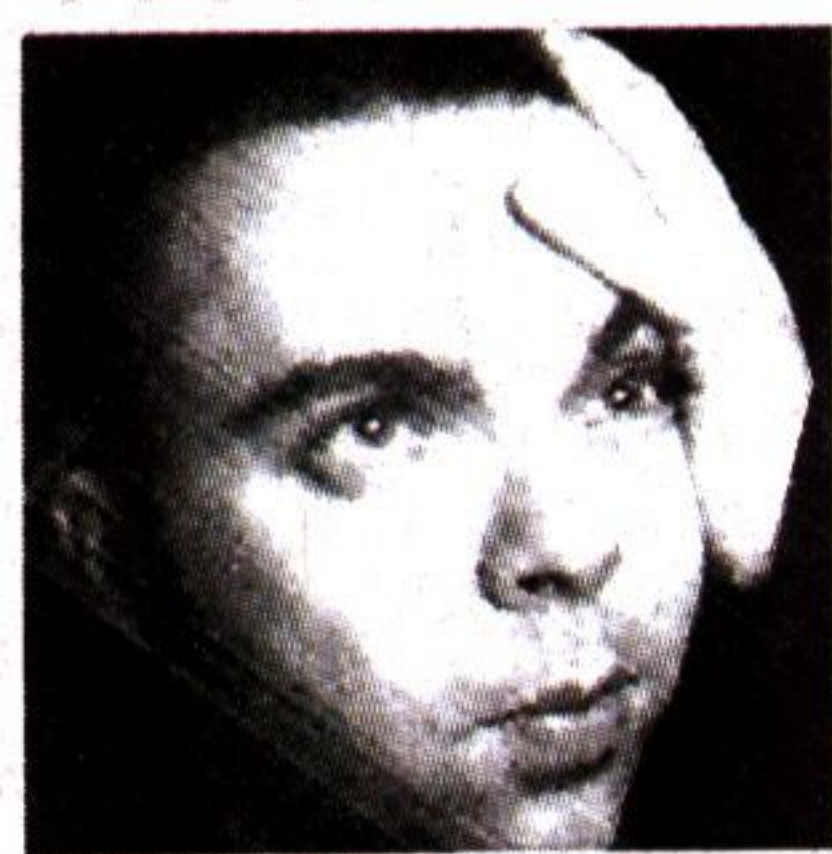


In the future all games will be made like this.



"On me 'ead, son."





# COMMENT THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

Following some unfortunate investments in timeshares, snake oil and rival magazine companies, **Stuart Campbell** finally makes the wise decision to spend his money on a shiny new PC instead

**“Actually physically buying a new PC appears to be very nearly frigging impossible”**

**DOOMSAYERS** will have you believe that PC ownership has peaked and is on the decline, with worrying ramifications for the future of PC gaming. Statistics appear to support this claim, but if you ask this reporter, it's nothing to do with a saturated market, the rise of the super-consoles, Internet access through the TV, or anything else. It's down to the fact that actually physically buying a new PC appears to be very nearly frigging impossible.

**WEEK 1, DAY 1:** Seeking to replace a disintegrating old 950MHz machine a couple of months ago, but wary of the overpriced, underspec'd tat on offer on the High Street, your correspondent makes the soon-to-be disastrous error of plumping for mail order instead. Chooses a well-established (around for more than a decade) company and despatches a cheque for many hundreds of pounds.

**WEEK 1, DAY 3:** “We’re a bit short of stock at the moment, there’s an unseasonal rush on, but we’ll try to get it to you this week. Yes, of course we’ve already cashed your cheque.”

**WEEK 2:** “Should definitely be with you next week.”

**WEEK 3:** “The boat carrying all our motherboards over from Europe sank.”

**WEEK 4, DAY 1:** “You’ll have it on Tuesday.”

**WEEK 4, DAY 2:** “OK, Wednesday.”

**WEEK 4, DAY 3:** “Honest, tomorrow, no kidding.”

**WEEK 4, DAY 4:** PC arrives, missing

several important parts, and refusing to so much as switch on.

**WEEK 5, DAY 3:** Just six short days later, company arranges to collect non-working PC.

**WEEK 6:** “We’ve run out of motherboards and CPUs again. And memory.”

**WEEK 7, DAYS 2-5:** Ring ring. Ring ring. Ring ring. Ring ring.

**WEEK 8, DAY 1:** After trying six different phone numbers and waiting another three days, your reporter finally manages to speak to a human employee of the Trading Standards Office (“This helpline is open Monday to Friday from 10.30am to 12 noon. Please leave a message, in order that we may gather round the machine and have a good laugh at the end of the day, because we’re as sure as bollocks not going to ring you back”), who reveals that “European Computers Ltd has stopped trading, or gone into receivership, or liquidation, or something. We’re not sure. Did you know that our staffing levels have been reduced by around 80 per cent by the government over the last few years?” Reply that no, I didn’t know that, but am very comforted that the money was spent on something as splendid as The Millennium Dome instead. Am delighted to learn that computing magazines are practically the only ones in the country who don’t subscribe to any scheme to protect readers from dodgy advertisers.

**WEEK 9, DAY 1:** Learning at least one lesson, select even more established

mail-order company and cough up the extra 40 quid (!) to pay by credit card.

**WEEK 9, DAY 3:** “We’re a bit short of stock at the moment, there’s an unseasonal rush on, but we’ll try to get it to you this week. Yes, of course we’ve already debited your credit card.”

**WEEK 9, DAY 4:** The Nintendo Gamecube costs £130.

**WEEK 10, DAY 5:** “I’ve just seen, with my own eyes this very minute, your machine being tested on the bench. If the tests are all OK, we’ll get it out this afternoon.”

**WEEK 11, DAY 1:** “We don’t have any memory chips in stock at all at the moment. No, there’s no possible way your machine could have been being tested on Friday, I don’t know who told you that. If the chips come in today, we’ll get it sent for tomorrow.”

**WEEK 11, DAY 2:** “The chips arrived and your machine is half-built. Unfortunately, I’ve just looked at the specs you gave us when you ordered the machine two full weeks ago, and have only just noticed that you need four drive bays and our normal cases only have three, so I’ll have to strip the machine back down, order another case, rebuild it all when that arrives in a couple of days time, and start the testing again. There’s no need for that kind of language.”

**WEEK 12:** Now £1,500 down. Still no new PC. Writing this column on my Psion organiser. I’ll keep you posted. Can someone else get the screenshots for Emulation Zone this month? Ta. **[CF]**

COMING NEXT ISSUE...

MASSIVE 6-PAGE REVIEW

## MAFIA

If you don’t want to sleep with the fishes then you’d better buy next month’s **PC ZONE** and check out our exclusive review of the new game from the creators of *Hidden & Dangerous*

## FOR YOU

GRAND PRIX 4, UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003 AND WARCRAFT III. PLUS... SEX: WHY ISN’T THERE ANY ON THE PC?

## FOR YOUR PC

NEOCRON, SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II, DOOM III, NEVERWINTER NIGHTS, COUNTER-STRIKE: CONDITION ZERO

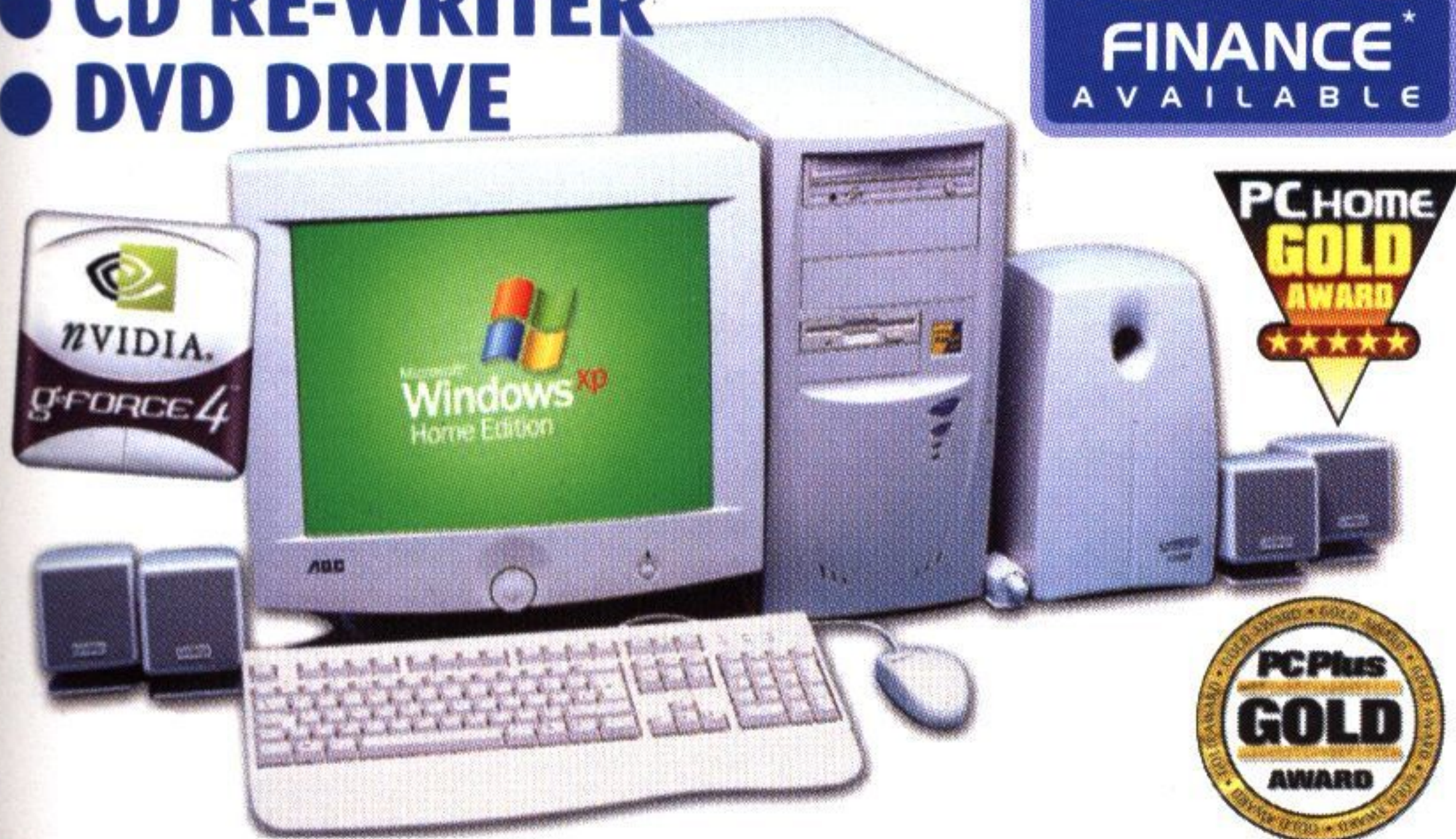
...AND THEN SOME

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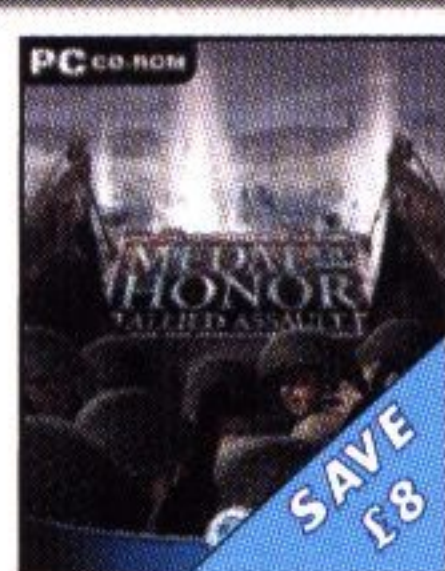
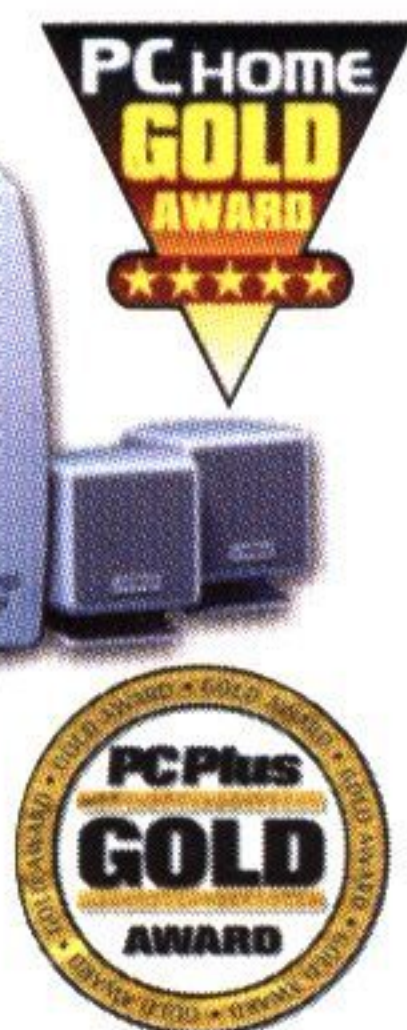


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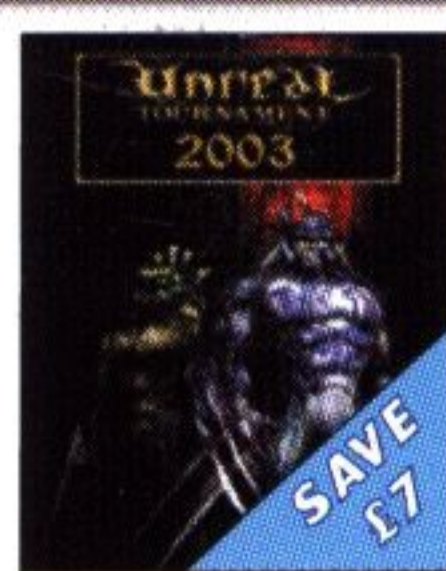
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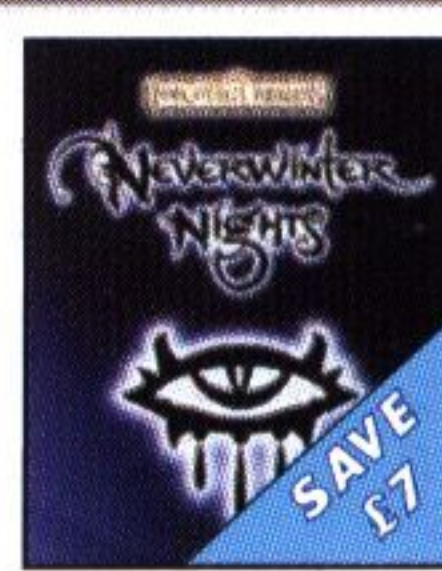
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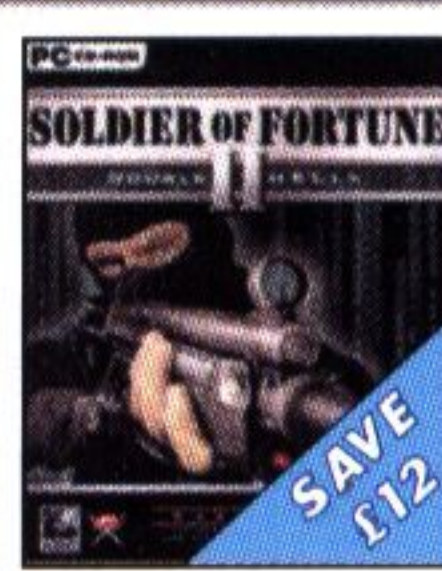
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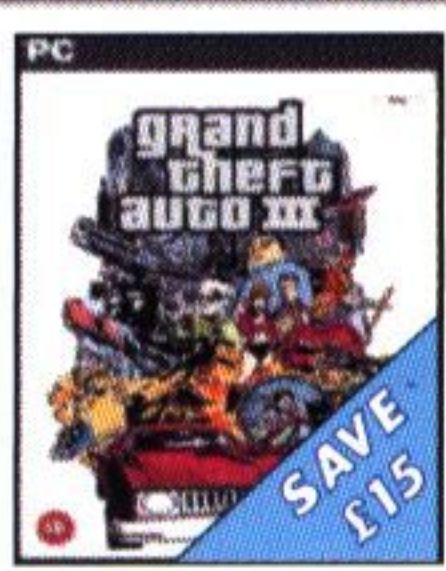
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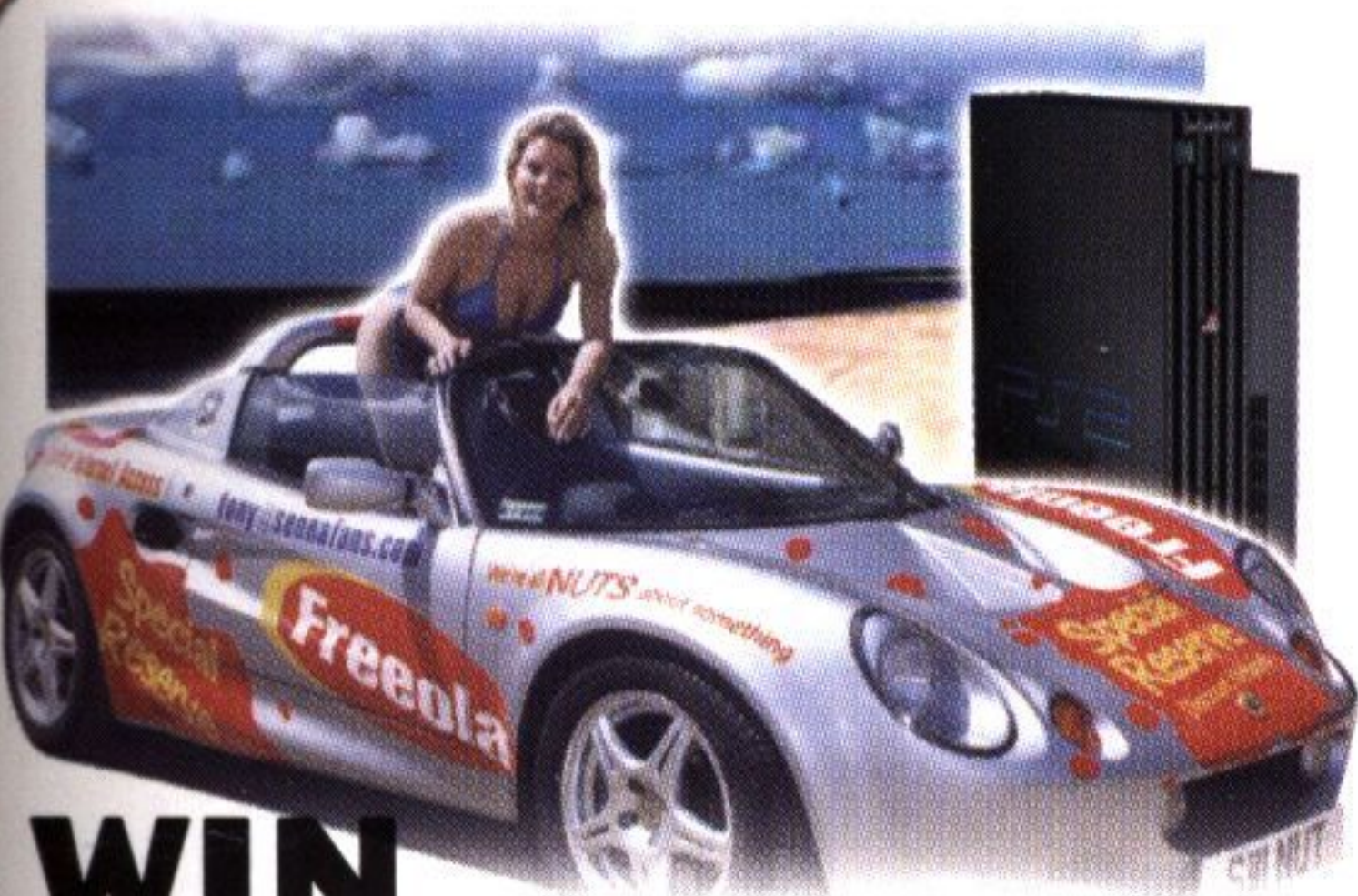
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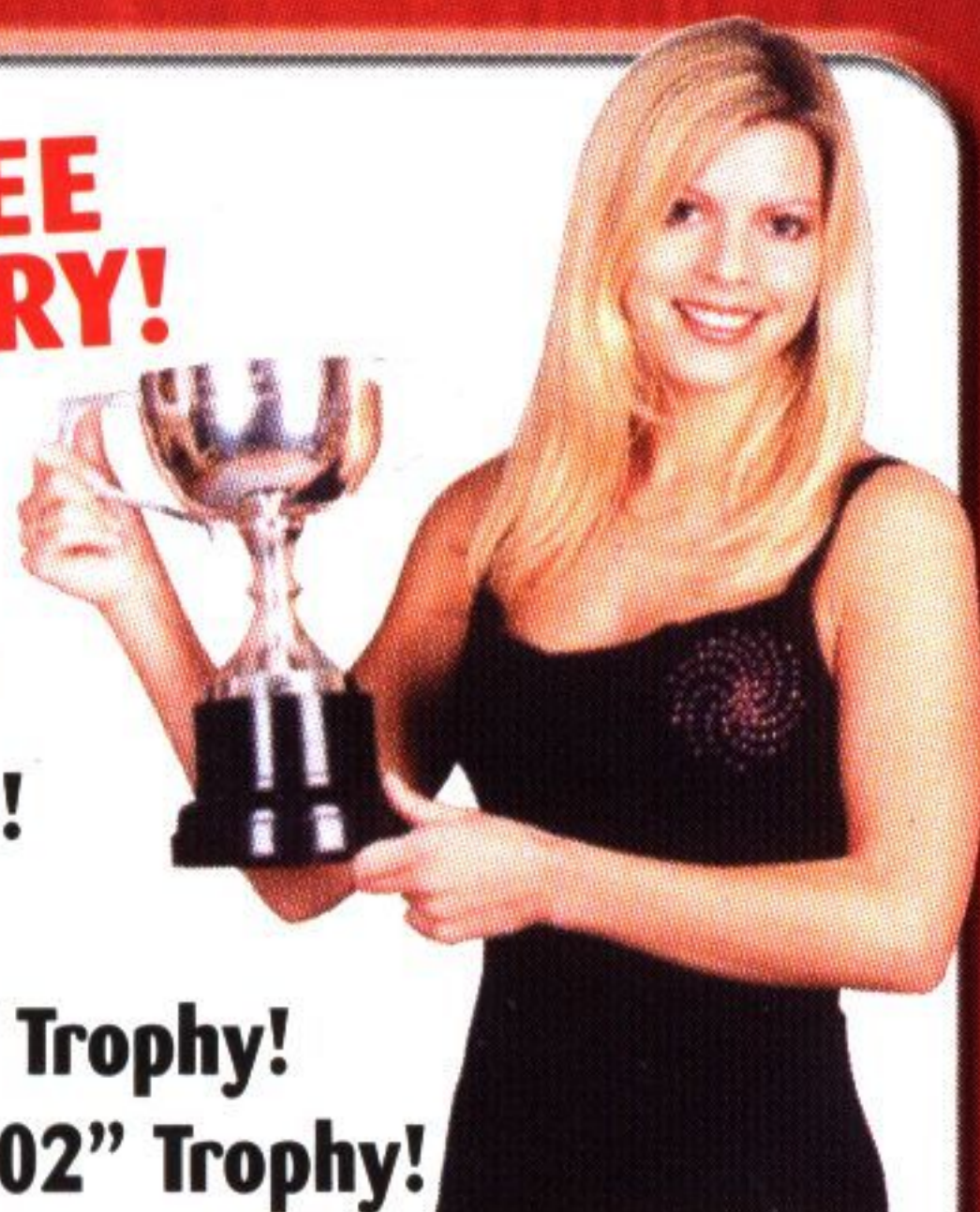
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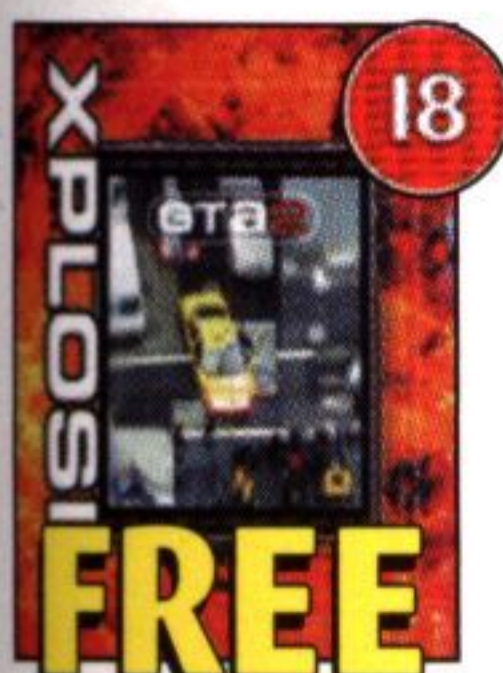
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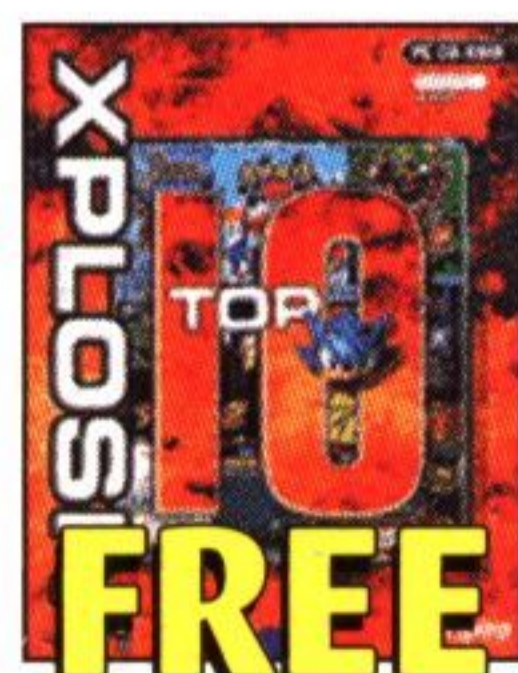
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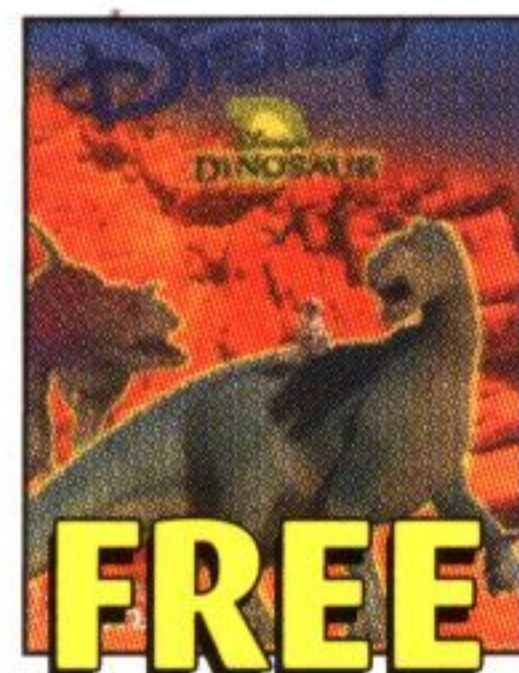
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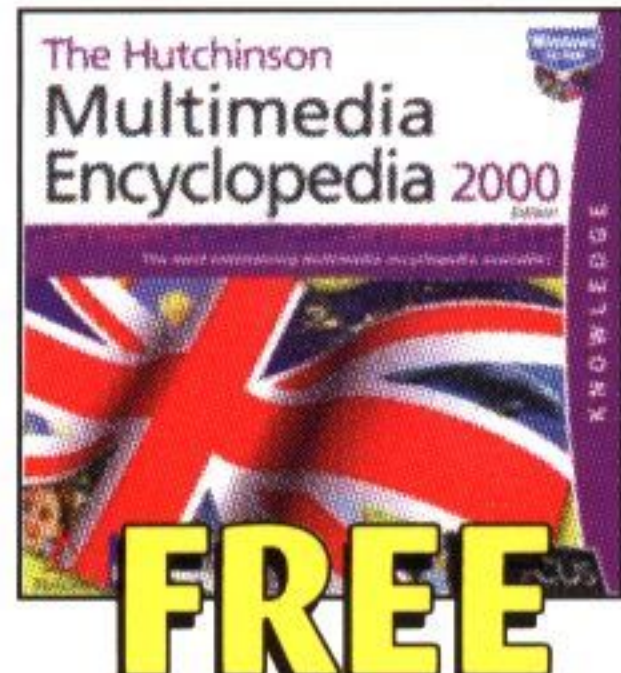
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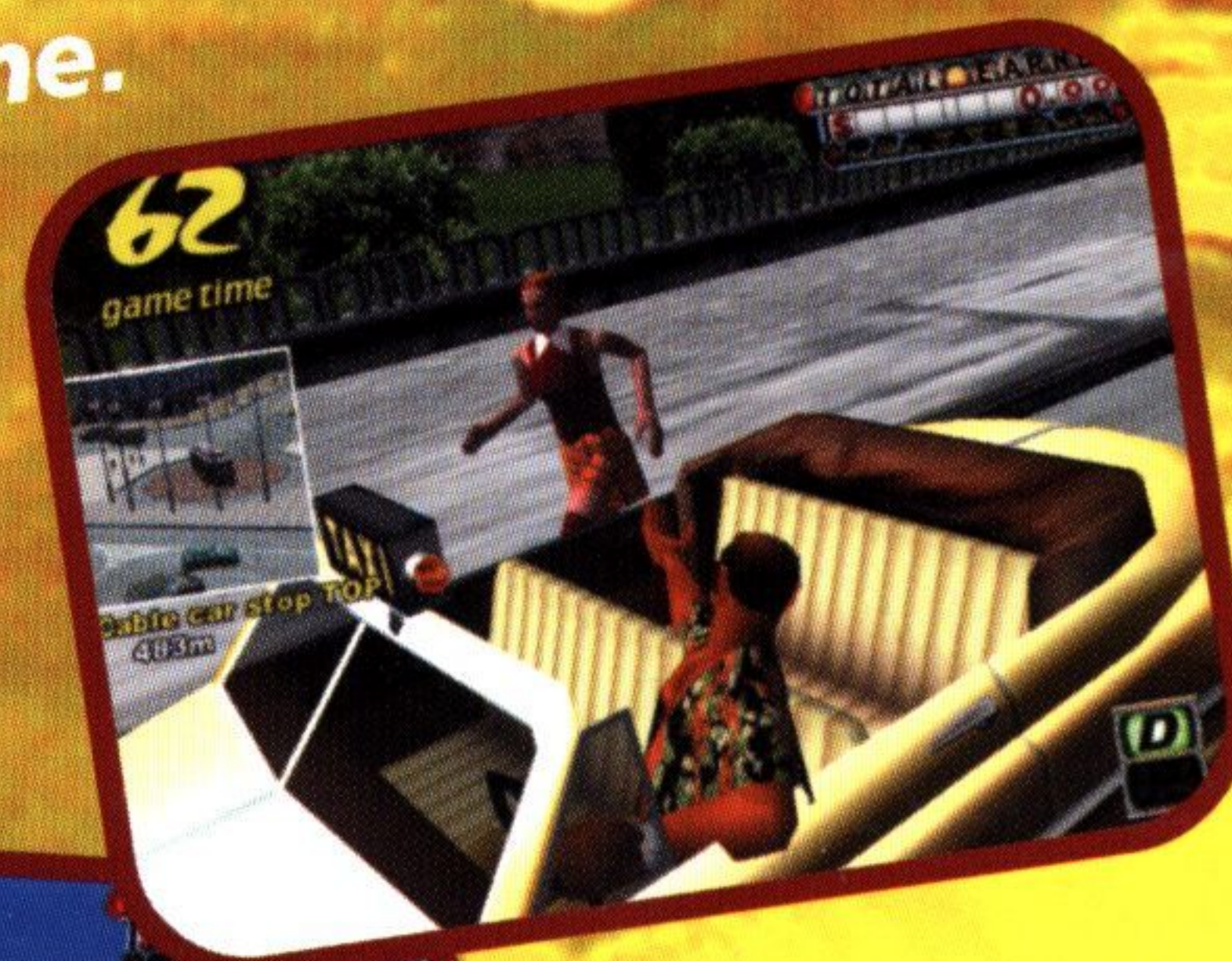
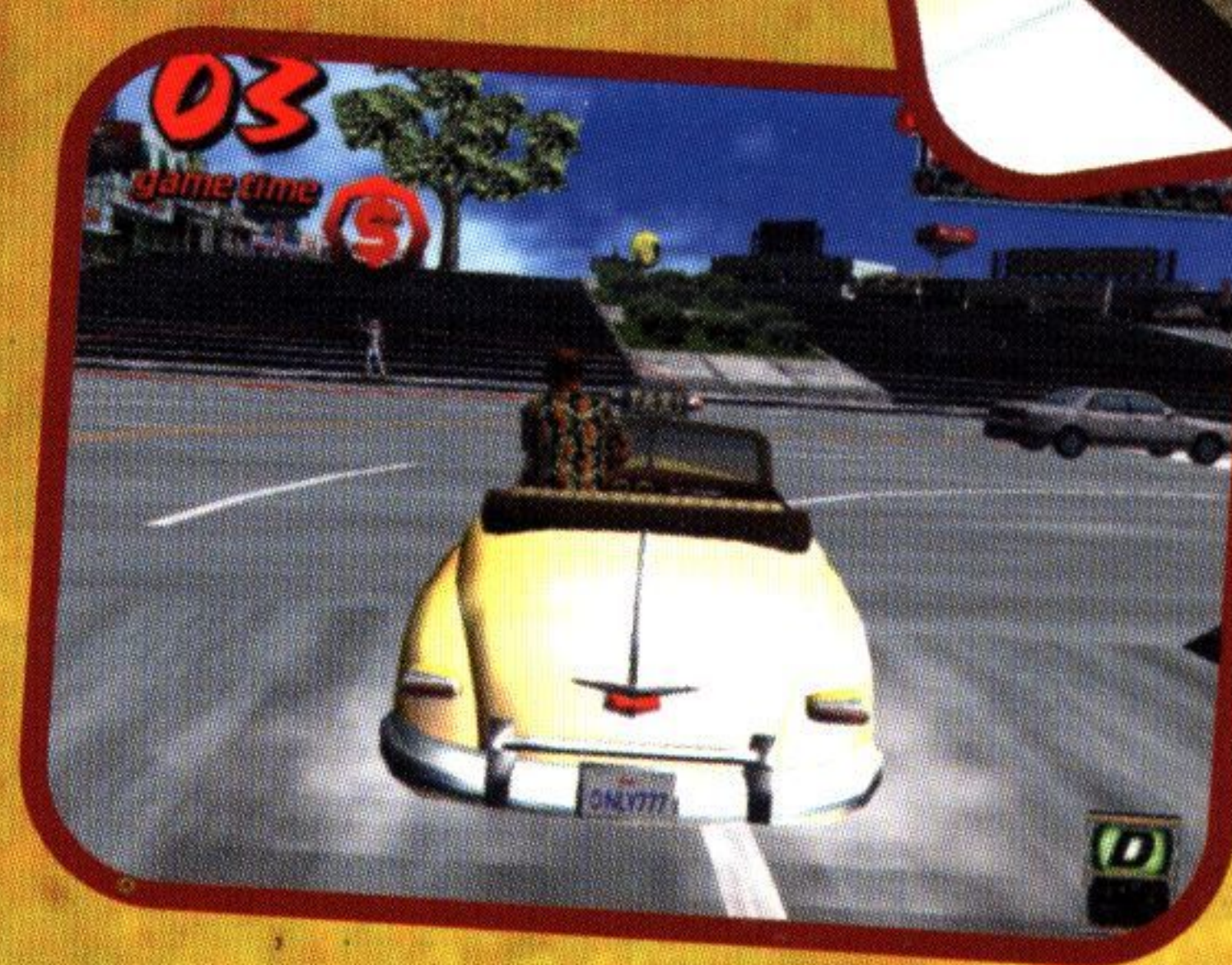
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